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BOMBAY BRANCH
OF THE
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WESTERN SIBERIA, INDEPENDENT TARTARY, KHIVA, BOKHARA &c.

RECOLLECTIONS OF SIBERIA,

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IN THE YEARS

1840 AND 1841.

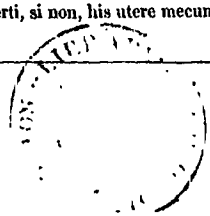
B2627

X-b-10

BY

CHARLES HERBERT COTTRELL, Esq.

. . . . . Si quid novisti rectius istis
Candidus imperti, si non, his utere mecum.——HORACE.



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PREFACE.

It may seem extraordinary that the *souvenirs* of a tour in Siberia should be sufficiently pleasing to tempt a traveller to commit them to paper. But though he can hardly hope that they will be as interesting to the public as to himself, still the very limited and often incorrect acquaintance we have with that country, and our few authentic details of its moral condition, induce him to venture to publish the notes made during an excursion of less than six months through a part of those distant regions. In Russia itself Siberia is almost as little known as in England; its very name condemns it without a trial. On our arrival at Moscow we were congratulated by some on having escaped from an exile whence so few return; by others we were cross-questioned as to the possibility of having really existed so long in such a place; and by all we were regarded as a nine-days' wonder, so incredible did it appear that such a journey should have been

made voluntarily, and without any specific object. *Omne ignotum est pro magnifico*, an adage no less true in our days than in those of Tacitus, perhaps more so, because so much less comparatively is unknown *now* than then.

In modern times we have, it is true, a *Tour in Siberia and Kamtchatka*, by Mr. Dobell, (an Irishman by birth, and now Russian Consul at Elsinore) in the years 1812 and 1814; but he describes the latter much more than the former. We have a *Pedestrian Tour*, by the late Captain Cochrane, in 1821, made under such extraordinary circumstances, as well as that of the blind traveller, Holman, that while they increased public interest in what regarded the narrators, they somewhat diminished their confidence in the accuracy of the information.

At a much more recent period a work has appeared under the auspices of Major Sabine, a translation of the German account of Baron Wrangel's voyage of discovery in the North-East of Siberia and Kamtchatka, undertaken at the same time that Captain Cochrane was travelling in those countries. It does not, however, describe in any way those parts of Siberia where we have been; it was, indeed, purely a tour of a scientific nature, executed by the orders of the late Emperor Alex-

ander, and, strange to say, no details of it were ever published in Russia—we could not learn on what account. In the course of the present narrative of our own reminiscenses, we shall, with all deference, offer some observations on it, in those points where we venture to differ from the noble author, on the strength of information acquired in the country itself.

There are various German works on Siberia, several of which appeared in the last century; the most valuable are the *Travels of Pallas, from the year* 1768 *to* 1774; a work of the highest merit, but of greater interest to the naturalist, than the general reader. Did he even go more into detail on the condition and mode of life of the inhabitants in that day, it could not be supposed to offer a just picture of Siberia in the middle of the nineteenth century. Russia, in general, has made greater strides in civilization since the accession of Peter the Great, than any country in the world in the same space of time. It would be unreasonable to expect that Siberia should have advanced with the same rapidity, as many other portions of that vast empire, in the scale of civilization, yet, we believe, that in proportion to her advantages, her progress will be found not to be slower, than that of other

nations. It is to be feared that hospitality is one of the virtues more honoured in ages and countries, in which artificial refinement has not yet reached a very high pitch. Judging Siberia by this standard, we should place her very low indeed in the scale, for, we believe, there is no country where it is so generally and so cordially practised. We should, indeed, be ungrateful if we did not seize every opportunity of offering our humble testimony to the uniform observance of this patriarchal usage among all classes from the Governor-general down to the peasant.

We have endeavoured, in the following work, to make the orthography of names and places as correct as possible, the want of which in almost every book published on Russia is so great, as to render the names of persons often difficult to recognise by those most familiar with them. Many of the Russian letters having no analogous sounds in our alphabet, are not easy to be represented; the (x), which is pronounced as in Spanish, we have given by (*kh*); the vowel (ы) by (*y*). This latter it is almost impossible for a foreigner to pronounce correctly; it is a French (*i*), with the most guttural sound that can be given it. (ш) is (*ch*), (ч) (*tch*) and (щ) (*stch*). There are two mutes which regulate the pronuncia-

tion of almost every word (ъ) and (ь). The first makes the sound long at the end of words, the other shortens and gives them a sharp sound; viz., the river Ob is pronounced as if written with an apostrophe at the end, thus, Ob'. The (ю) at the beginning of a word is pronounced like (*yu*), in the middle and end like the French (*u*): in the northern river АНЮЙ, this letter with the one that follows it, forms a sort of tripthongue, which may be expressed thus, Anuiy. The accent is, generally, on the second syllable in trisyllabic Russian proper names, and the (*e*) is often pronounced as (*o*), for example *Berèzof* is pronounced as if written *Berozof*. The first syllable being commonly short, the (*o*) in it is often pronounced as a short (*a*), as *Golitzin* is pronounced *Galitzin*, but for all these conventual usages there is no fixed rule.

As these pages were going to press, we regret to learn that the principal part of the beautiful city of Casan has again been reduced to ashes, by a tremendous fire, the origin of which is involved in mystery, not without strong suspicion of its being the work of an incendiary. The University and Observatory seem to have been destroyed, which is truly a national calamity. These were splendid buildings worthy of any country. The little town of Perm has also almost ceased to exist owing to the ravages of the same destructive element.

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ERRATA.

Page 105, line 5 from bottom, *dele* most.
„ 118, „ 2, *for* primogenius, *read* primigenius.
„ 170, „ 1, *for* little Russian, *read* Little Russian.
„ 181, „ 15, *for* Tschugo-Tschuk, *read* Tschugo-Tschak.
„ 182, „ 18, *for* was freezing hard, *read* was freezing sharply.
„ 224 and 228, *for* Yénisséik, *read* Yénisséisk.
„ 237, line 5 from bottom, *after* Tomsk, *dele* and.
„ 319, „ 16, *for* Shammanism, *read* Shamanism.
„ 325, „ 24, *for* strongly, *read* strangely.
„ „ lines 25, 26. The semicolon should be after "respect," not after "mines."
„ 406, line 21, *for* ever, *read* even.

RECOLLECTIONS OF SIBERIA.

CHAPTER I.

Moscow.—Sparrow Hills.—State of Prisoners there.—Dr. Haas.—Converting the Jews.—Roskolniks.—Their departure for Siberia.—Their treatment on the Road.—Our own start for Siberia.—Travelling in Russia.—Route to Makatelum.—Visit to Mr. de Karamsin.—Country Life in Russia.—Crossing Volga at Murom.—Simbirsk.—Crossing it again at the frontier of the Government of Orenburg.—Post-masters.—Dishonesty of Russian *Chinovniks*.—Russian Artillery.—Mode of purchasing Cavalry troop-horses.—Cossacks of the Ural.—Russian Merchants.—Arrival at Orenburg.

In common with most other travellers who have bent their steps as far as the ancient city of the Czars, we took the earliest opportunity of witnessing one of the periodical gaol-deliveries, and the departure of a convoy to Siberia. On an eminence, some four miles from the Kremlin, though, from the great extent of ground which Moscow covers, but a short distance beyond its walls, is the general depôt for almost all the subjects of the Russian empire, who are sentenced either to banishment for aggravated crimes, or to become merely colonists in Siberia.

It must not be supposed that all those, whose doom it is to pass the remainder of their lives in this distant part of the Russian dominions, are so sentenced, either for civil or political offences. Still less true it is, that it is in any degree a punishment to the

great majority. The far greater part consists of persons living in a state of *vagabondage*, belonging to no one, without a home, or the means of gaining an honest livelihood. All those in short who have no passport or certificate from the official register of the police of the district to which they belong, are sent to colonize the thinly populated parts of Siberia. We shall in another place describe their condition when arrived at their different destinations, and we believe that we shall be able to convince our readers, who are not unwilling to be convinced, that the general impression conveyed by the term "banishment to Siberia," is no less erroneous as regards the persons banished, than unjust towards the Russian Government.

The long ridge of rising ground known by the name of the Sparrow Hills, to which we have alluded, would in a less flat country than is the general character of this part of Russia, present no feature sufficiently marked to deserve particular notice. But as the whole of the route from Petersburg to Moscow, a distance of four hundred and fifty English miles, is one dead flat, with the exception of a small part, where it crosses the Valdai Hills, this slightly elevated plateau appears almost a mountain. But the view which it presents, and the associations connected with it, stamp it with a peculiar interest. Moscow lies before you, a living panorama—at its feet flows the little river Moskva, which, from its meanderings through the adjoining meadows, has all the picturesque appearance of a brook, the stream being barely rapid enough to float down the necessary provision of firewood for the city. Nearer to you are the superb Donskoi, Siminofskoi, and De-

vitzkoi convents, above which the unrivalled Kremlin rears its majestic front.

It is not only the vast space of ground that Moscow covers, which gives it so imposing an appearance, though, the circuit of its walls being twenty-seven English miles, it is almost the largest city in the world—but from the irregular way in which it is built, on terraces rising one above another, the eye embraces more easily all its most striking features at once. Its three hundred churches, of all imaginable forms, and painted with all the colours of the rainbow, many of them originally Tatar mosques which have been consecrated, and display the cross raised above the crescent, each reflecting in its different hues the rays of an almost tropical sun, combine to give it an oriental character totally unlike any other city. Casan, indeed, boasts many of its finest points, and bears a striking resemblance to Moscow, with the additional advantage of having the magnificent Volga visible from its walls. Could a painter group on one piece of canvas the same number of picturesque objects which are embraced in the *coup d'œil* from the Sparrow Hills, we doubt if his imagination could select and arrange any that are wanting here, to form his *beau idéal*. The vast number of golden domes in the Kremlin alone, with the lofty Ivan Veliki towering above them all; the fantastic form and colouring of the church of Saint Basil, so near as to appear to belong to it—contrasted with the whiteness of the superb modern palaces, and hospitals which might well be taken for palaces—the theatres, the barracks, and military school—its *manège*, the largest in Europe,—intermixed with the more humble

and rare wooden buildings,—serve to form an *ensemble*, difficult to imagine, because the world contains nothing to which to compare it.

The Sparrow Hills possess no inconsiderable interest from being the point whence the French army, in 1812, caught their first glimpse of this devoted city. Well may we imagine their sensations, when, like the soldiers of Hannibal viewing from the summit of the Alps the fertile plains of Italy, they saw within their grasp, what they had long anticipated as the goal, where their labours were to terminate, and victory to crown their unparallelled efforts. From thence they could distinctly discern the rear-guard of the Russian army retreating, and its numerous population pouring forth to leave them undisturbed possession. Here, may we imagine, Napoleon anxiously awaiting his dearest triumph—that moment, which never arrived, when a deputation of her most illustrious senators should offer him the keys of prostrate Moscow. And had she no interest for him in her Kremlin, her churches, and her university—had her society no charms, her inmates no hospitality, no luxury to offer—surely, her self-devotion in the hour of danger, when the fate of Europe, no less than that of Russia, was in the balance—when her unheard-of sacrifice annihilated the power of her enemy, in her self-kindled fires—it would always be the spot to which the traveller would most anxiously point his steps, and excite in him the enthusiasm which every son and daughter of Moscow feels in so eminent a degree. She has, indeed, risen like a phœnix from her ashes, more lovely than before—and we at least must always feel that after having seen

almost all that Europe offers of interest, we can look back on no period of our lives, which has left so many agreeable recollections, as the three months we spent at Moscow.

But we forget that our purpose is to write of Siberia. It was then on the Sparrow Hills that we first began to feel a desire of knowing the real state of Siberia, and the condition of its inhabitants. As we began by observing, one of our earliest excursions at Moscow was to witness the departure of the *déportés* for their place of exile. Our notions on this subject were naturally gathered from the descriptions of other travellers, and Mr. Murray's *Hand-book*. We had read how, in this general place of rendezvous, "all ages and sexes were indiscriminately thrust together,

Fresh from the knout, and recent from the chain,

till the limbs, torn and maimed, had recovered sufficient strength to bear them on their way," and how "the mournful band were ignorant alike of their sentence, as of their crime." But from having travelled a good deal, and knowing how little dependence is to be placed on travellers' views in general, which differ so materially according to their knowledge of languages, their own personal advantages, and the society into which they chance to be thrown, we were naturally anxious to judge for ourselves on this, as well as other matters. An English friend of ours, established about forty years at Moscow, without having lost a particle of his English feelings, to whom we expressed our wish of witnessing this ceremony, and whose account of it was totally at variance with the one we have just quoted, kindly undertook to escort us thither, and we claim

the testimony of several other English gentlemen who formed our party, should this ever meet their eye, to corroborate the correctness of our relation.

We could not have been more fortunate than we were in the choice of our *cicerone*. Our friend Mr. Rowand has been for many years one of the committee of management for all matters connected with prison discipline. It was, therefore, his peculiar province to visit, from time to time, the establishment on the Sparrow Hills, and his great good-nature prompts him to act as guide and interpreter to any of his countrymen who come to Moscow. We were there introduced by him to a Dr. Haas, a Roman Catholic physician from the Rhenish provinces, and like himself one of the prison directors. This gentleman is more than a second Howard—he literally spends his whole life in doing good, to the sacrifice of his health and fortune. He has an apartment in the prisoners' hospital here, and one in another hospital in Moscow, and during our residence there, he had well nigh fallen a victim to his philanthropy, having, at one time, four hundred and fifty patients on his hands, the greater number with an infectious fever, which all the hospital surgeons had taken, and deprived him consequently of their assistance. To dedicate one's whole life to any pursuit, be it what it may, without the incitement of honours and emoluments to be gained by it, a man must be an enthusiast, and although we are convinced that the motives which guide and cheer this gentleman through his arduous undertakings, are a high sense of Christian duty and good-will towards men, yet the force of habit has rendered it also his hobby and his

delight. We found him among eighty prisoners who were to begin their sorrowful journey that morning, conversing with and comforting each individual, though we should not say that we observed the necessity of the latter, excepting in one instance, that of a young woman under twenty years of age, who had set fire to a whole village, and had been knouted three months before. She did not certainly view with complacency the prospect before her, but all the rest appeared totally indifferent. We had an opportunity of talking to many of them who spoke German, and so far are they from regretting their fates, that we saw in the prison at Moscow one old man ninety years of age, fall down at the doctor's feet entreating his interference *to get him sent to Siberia.* This was, however, impossible, as the law does not allow any who have passed the age of sixty to undergo the toilsome journey.

Dr. Haas makes a point of becoming acquainted with the reasons for which every individual is sentenced to Siberia, and it constantly happens, that when, upon investigation, he finds a loop-hole for mercy, he procures for the prisoner a postponement of his departure, and if, on revising the case, any injustice appears done, often obtains a remission of the sentence. To each person he distributes the New Testament, published in different languages by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, with the passages most appropriate to their respective cases marked out for their particular attention. The doctor told us, that a year or two ago, an English lady who was witnessing the scene we are describing, to whom he showed several passages which he had marked, naïvely inquired what

texts he selected for the Polish exiles; he confessed he was a little posed, although there are many which enjoin submission to the "powers that be." He gave us a German Testament, in which he noted down the circumstances under which it had been presented to us, and we shall ever regard his handwriting with feelings of pleasure from the recollections of our visit to the Sparrow Hills. It frequently happens, that among the convicts are some of the Jewish tribe, on whom of course the Doctor spares no persuasion to induce them to embrace Christianity. We would fain hope, that his efforts are not always in vain, but we fear that he is too often their dupe.

On the present occasion, we saw him in earnest conversation with one of these proselytes, who was speaking German to him; and we discovered that, being now on the eve of his departure, he felt, or feigned, some remorse, for having deceived the worthy Doctor as to his conversion, and was then expressing his contrition and assurances of hearty repentance. It appeared that he had been four times baptized, and had received on each different occasion some solid mark of the charity of the person who flattered himself he had gained a soul unto salvation. He now admitted that the Doctor had been one of those so deceived, and that he had even sold the Testament he had given him at the time of his baptism. But he at last professed to be really convinced of the error of his ways, and promised to become a Christian indeed. It is probable that he was at least sincere in his promise of professing Christianity, as great advantages are held out to Jews when established in Siberia, who abandon

the faith of their fathers. It enables them to marry, and settle themselves more comfortably as colonists; and, what is an essential point to a Jew, to enjoy the society of those among whom their lot is cast. This man had been sent to Siberia before, and made his escape; had probably been baptized there, and relapsed into Judaism, in order to profit by the Doctor's liberality on his re-conversion. We have frequently heard in Russia of these repeated recantations, and how the new Christian has complained sometimes on the last occasion, that he got more by it on the former ones.

During their detention at the depôt, before their turn comes to start for their place of destination, the unhappy people have every provision made for them, compatible with their situation. The females are lodged on one side of the prison, the men in another court by themselves, and never communicate with each other, unless they have their relations with them. The different sorts of malefactors are classified as much as possible according to the nature of their crimes, of which many are of the most heinous description, for which, even now, death is the punishment in England. Those who have committed more venial offences, are separated from the abandoned criminals, while those who are to be banished solely for *vagabondage*, (and they form the great majority) and are merely to become colonists, are entirely separated from the society of the depraved and vicious.

We saw in an apartment by themselves, three persons, evidently of a better class, and whom we recognised, from their flowing beards, as *Roskolniks*, or, as they call themselves, *people of the ancient faith.*

There are in Russia a vast number of dissenters of this denomination, whose principles of doctrine may be in some degree compared to those of the Puseyites of our own country. During the seventeenth century, in the reign of the Czar Alexis, the Patriarch Nikon, a man of great erudition, perceived that the Russian-Sclavonic translation of the Bible, and other sacred books, from the original Greek, was in many parts faulty and the sense perverted; he obtained his sovereign's permission to make the requisite corrections, which were ordered to be generally adopted. A certain number of anti-reformers succeeded in persuading the common people that these innovations were heretical and attacked the foundation of their religion, and so induced them to adhere to the old version. A severe law was passed against these simple-minded people, who were literally persecuted till the reign of the Emperor Alexander, when the celebrated Metropolitan of Moscow, Plato, proposed some milder regulations which received the Emperor's sanction, and the persecution ceased.

Before this period, Peter the Great had, as we think, very unwisely, attempted to deprive the people of their beards; which was strongly opposed, and principally by these same *Roskolniks*, who held it as a point of religion, not to shave their faces. The opposition was so far successful, that a tax was laid on beards, instead of abolishing them altogether, and the *Roskolniks* were satisfied. At the present day, any person above the class of *Mujik* who wears a long beard, and who is not a priest, is known to belong to this sect. According to Gibbon, the earliest Christians

were the authors of this superstition. Tertullian calls the use of the razor, "a lie against our own face, and an impious attempt to improve the works of the Creator." The Russian peasant has a better excuse than the Carthaginian, in the protection which the beard affords against the severe cold; and it does seem to be a most wise provision of nature, in a climate where the quicksilver not unfrequently freezes.

Within the last few years, the number of schismatics has so much increased, and the mischief they have created become so great, that the Emperor has been obliged to denounce and punish them. From the original *Roskolniks* have sprung up a variety of dissenters on the most absurd and mischievous grounds. One of them, for instance, has discovered that the name of Jesus should be written with four letters instead of five, or *vice versa*; and upon points like these, their advocates have succeeded in destroying the peace of families and villages even, persuading their partisans that it is a heinous offence against heaven to associate or have any intercourse with such as do not hold the same opinions; so that children are divided against their parents, and the dearest ties of affection torn asunder, for such trivial and unimportant considerations. What was the precise article of dissent of the persons we saw at the Sparrow Hills, we have forgotten; but they were aggravated offenders who had been long employed as missionaries, to gain proselytes to their creed, for which they were now on the point of making a journey to Siberia. We could not help being struck with their appearance, and respectability of manner, and thinking how

much more true it is at this day, than when Lucretius said—

Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum.

When everything is ready for the departure of the convoy, the party, having made a hearty repast of bread, soup, and *qvass*, (all which we partook of, and found extremely palatable) are formed in marching order, and set out under an escort of soldiers, with drums beating, and headed by an officer, who is changed every day. Outside the prison walls the troop is considerably augmented by the families of the condemned, who are always allowed to accompany their relations; and those who have the means may provide themselves with an *abooz*, or sledge, instead of walking, of which the expense is trifling. The account given by Mr. Bremner of this ceremony will not be found to differ much from our own; he remarks, however, that he was unable to find out whether, in the case of a nobleman, any difference is made, in allowing a conveyance or any other mitigation, not usual in ordinary cases. We think that if he had inquired he would have had no difficulty in learning that such leniency is shown, as is compatible with the security of the prisoner. But we doubt if, in our own country, it would be considered in accordance with justice to make any distinction between the rich and poor, the noble or the peasant. In travelling to and from Siberia we have frequently met the prisoners on their road, and they are invariably accompanied by a number of sledges, which are provided by Government in case of sickness or infirmity.

We took great pains to ascertain the real weight

of their chains, and having seen them weighed, can certify, that in the case of the most desperate offenders they never exceeded four pounds English. These are placed on the legs or wrists, at the option of the prisoners, who are fastened two and two together; they generally prefer to have their hands and arms at liberty.

The first day's march of the exiles is only eight English miles; it varies, however, according to the distance of the villages where they are to be quartered for the night, and never exceeds fourteen miles. From having pursued the same road which they take, in great part, to the very farthest point, we can testify that their quarters and general well-being improve as they advance. There is a house especially appropriated to the exiles in every village, which is, generally speaking, the best in the vicinity. They have a small allowance of money per day for their food, which they club together, and never fail to have their funds augmented by the charity of the inhabitants of the places through which they pass. We believe, that even in our own country, the duty of almsgiving is not more generally practised than in Russia. The merchants and richer class of shopkeepers especially devote large sums annually to this purpose, and in Siberia the exiles, or as they simply call them, "Nestchastni ludi," (unfortunate people,) are often wholly supplied with their daily bread by the charity of the natives.

That those who conduct themselves properly are rarely ill-treated on their journey we are fully convinced—but as the officer who has the charge of them only goes one day's march, it may occasionally happen

that in the frequent change of superintendents they now and then meet with one of an unfeeling and tyrannical disposition. We have the authority of Dr. Haas for asserting (and his extreme philanthropy will defend him from the imputation of having a bias unfavourable to these poor wretches) that in general when the Government errs, it is on the side of mercy, and that when anything like cruelty is practised, it is by the subordinate agents, who are often necessarily able to do so without discovery. We have been led into a longer digression than we first intended, yet have a hope that these preliminary observations, although not entirely new, may not be wholly without interest to our readers. Being intimately connected with Siberia, as a place of exile, they deserve consideration before we describe the condition of the banished, when arrived at their place of destination.

We were on the point of bidding adieu to Moscow when an opportunity of visiting Siberia, under the most favourable auspices, presented itself. Had we taken time to calculate systematically the *pros* and *cons*, we should probably have decided in the negative. We congratulate ourselves upon having acted on the impulse of the moment, and having taken advantage of the opportunity. The prospect which lay before us was certainly unflattering: a trip of ten thousand miles through a country which all our previous ideas represented as semi-barbarous, at the most inclement season of the year, with whose language we were almost wholly unacquainted, and the uncertainty of being allowed to proceed through those parts which we particularly wished to visit, were difficulties that it required

some resolution to decide upon encountering. Our travelling companion gave us courage, and on the $\frac{27\text{ August}}{8\text{ September}}$ we started on our expedition.

His Highness Prince Dmitri Golitzin, the Governor-General of Moscow, had kindly furnished us with letters for the governors of the different provinces through which we were likely to pass, as well as the Governor-General of West Siberia; and to these valuable recommendations we were indebted, in a great degree, for the satisfactory accomplishment of a journey which we believe no other *living* Englishman has made, except two missionaries many years established in Selenginsk. A very comfortable travelling carriage, an agreeable companion, and a good servant, are three advantages that we possessed at the outset; but we were well aware that the former must be changed for a kibitka of the country as soon as the snow set in, and it was very uncertain how long our companion's route and our own would be the same. In any country where the roads are not good, it is better to travel in the usual conveyance which the experience of the natives has found most convenient; but in Norway, Sweden, and Russia, it is indispensably necessary in winter to adopt this maxim. Throughout Russia, and especially Siberia, travelling is done more expeditiously than in any part of the world where railroads are not in vogue; but we will not recommend to our readers to post any great distance in the interior unaccompanied by some Russian whose passport insures attention, or at least guarantees him against chicanery. We neither mean to abuse (as many travellers delight to do) the institutions of a country, where we always remember we

are visitors, and where our stay depends on the sufferance of the authorities, and our own good will and pleasure, and should certainly advise a foreigner in England, who did not like what he met with here, to leave us, and think the rule is good in our own cases. Neither do we mean to propose a system of reform in the arrangement of Russian post-horses; it has defects without doubt, which are easier to cavil at than remedy; and these defects affect Russian travellers as well as foreigners, our ignorance of the language always excepted. We must, however, adhere to our opinion that an Englishman who expects to find the same expedition in changing horses in the interior of Russia, as he does, or used to do, on the great north-road, had better never go so far to undeceive himself.

The greatest disadvantage to ordinary travellers, is the number of generals, civil and military, who are constantly on the road; having made a great part of our tour with a Governor-General, we can speak feelingly as to the private advantages and public disadvantages it entails. For example, a great public functionary, with the rank of general, proposes to make a journey of four or five thousand miles with a numerous retinue; he is entitled by law to twenty horses (the number always depends on the traveller's rank). He writes, some time before he purposes to set out, to all the post-masters on the road by which he is to pass, to announce his arrival on or about a certain day. This certain day is probably the most uncertain possible; and to our own knowledge, it not unfrequently happens that twenty horses are kept

waiting at every station for the gentleman in question one month before he arrives. The consequence is, that other travellers of lesser consideration are detained for hours, and even days, till their patience is exhausted, and bribery is their only resource; and this even occasionally fails, from positive want of horses. The loss to the owners, who are not the post-masters, but the peasants, especially in harvest time, is very serious, because they are not paid for the time the horses are detained; and in the event of royalty travelling at that season, though it pays more liberally than individuals, it is positive ruin. A certain number of horses must always be kept for the mails and numerous *feld-jägers*, who are constantly being dispatched in every direction; in short, the number of the privileged class is so great, who, on the slightest demur, take the law into their own hands, that an unprotected traveller is often unable to proceed, at all events without paying at least double the tariff. These remarks apply, however, principally to the main-roads, and the further you advance in Siberia, the less communication there is, and the greater the number of the horses. The only set off against these inconveniences is the extreme cheapness of posting. Between Petersburg and Moscow a pair of horses does not cost quite seven farthings per English mile; and in Siberia, only half that sum. The postillions are proportionably moderate in their expectations.

One of Lord Byron's "northern suns obscurely bright," warned us of the approach of winter, as we passed through the gate of Moscow; but as we were south and eastward bound, we had hopes of being able

to travel for two months upon wheels. The road as far as Wladimir was not new to us, as we had been a fortnight before to the fair of Nijni Novogorod, or as the Russians still call it, of Makarief, from which place it has been removed not many years; and thus far it was the same. Neither is it new in all probability to many of our readers, for it has been repeatedly described by other travellers, who have much more descriptive or inventive talent than ourselves. If there be any so ignorant, it will suffice to say that picturesque scenery is the last thing to be expected—a vast extent of uninclosed country, with here a forest and there a river—a village once perhaps between the post-stations, little traffic except immediately before and after the afore-mentioned fair, with an immense proportion of dust or mud, as the season happens to be dry or wet—form the principal feature in this part of Russia.

The summer of 1840 was an unusually wet one; we hardly saw one fine day, and the state of the weather has such an effect on the state of the roads, that a traveller's hopes in Russia, *par excellence*, depend upon the height of the barometer. At the time we are writing the new *chaussée* from Moscow to Nijni is completed: it was then only partially so, and we know of no greater nuisance in any country than helping to make a new road. Where there is a very thick coat of macadamized stone it is bad enough; but when the distance from which it is brought is great, as in many parts of the Nijni road, and they are consequently economical of the material, and soft unbinding earth is substituted for stone, which becomes like putty after a shower of rain, it is intolerable.

Before we had got fifty miles from Moscow, we were overtaken by a violent storm, which did not improve the *chaussée;* and after passing Wladimir, we quitted it altogether for a sandy no-road, which was now a sea of mud. Before we arrived here, however, we had the comfort of seeing, on our reaching the post, a *teléga* driving furiously, which turned out to be a *general's aide-de-camp* just in time to lay an embargo on the horses we had fancied to be destined for us. This detained us three hours; but we were extremely fortunate in not meeting with hardly a second delay of this kind during the whole journey.

Wladimir, one of the oldest towns in Russia, is about a hundred and twenty English miles from Moscow. It was once the capital, and contained a number of fine buildings, traces of some of which still exist; it has, however, fallen from its high estate, though recently raised to the rank of a university. It is well situated on an eminence, has a cathedral, the usual number of churches, and, to a traveller an important consideration, a tolerable *restaurant.* About eighty miles farther is the town of Murom, large and well-built, on the river Okka, which meets the Volga at Nijni. The river is wide and rapid; we crossed it on a large raft, an affair which occupied twenty minutes, although our men worked hard. A very long rope is passed from one side of it to the other, by means of which the raft is propelled. When there are many horses, cattle, &c., to be ferried over, the process of course is slow, but sure. We saw here a number of large vessels laden with merchandize of all descriptions from the fair of Nijni, which were towed by forty or

fifty horses each, placed in rows of five abreast. As they can necessarily only go a foot's pace, it may be imagined that the water carriage is not expeditious; they have, however, no steamers here, and it is consequently the best means of transporting cargoes of heavy goods.

Hitherto the use of steamers in the interior is very limited, although the number of navigable rivers is so great. Private speculation is rare in matters of a public nature, and the establishment of a line of steamers between Jaroslaf, Nijni, Casan, and Astracan alone, would be a serious undertaking for the government. There are now two little boats, which do not however run more than two months in the year, between Nijni and Astracan, and they are badly managed enough; still we think the revenue would gain largely by building a few steamers to tow the vessels of burden between these two points.

The town of Murom is famous for its sterlet, one of the numerous delicious fish which are only found in Russia. Not long after crossing the river, we passed through one of the largest pine forests on this side the Ural. Our route lay to Simbirsk and Orenburg, but on the third day we left the direct road, about forty or fifty versts, to go to pay a visit to an officer of the artillery of the guard, at a village called Makatelum. We found, indeed, a village, and nothing more, there being as yet no house on the estate, which, however, contains a thousand peasants, and is the property of Madame de Karamsin, the widow of the celebrated historian of that name. We were most hospitably received by her son, who very wisely took advantage

of a year's leave of absence from his regiment, to banish himself here, in order to superintend his own affairs. Did the Russian noblemen more frequently imitate this young man's example, their finances would be in a much more flourishing condition than is generally the case. Stewards and agents are the ruin of the landholders in all countries, and still more so in Russia, where they have a wider scope for dishonesty and rapine. Our host was living in a cottage in no way better than those of his peasants, excepting that he had furniture and books brought all the way from Moscow. He described himself as wholly without society, his few neighbours being very little superior to their serfs. The country gentleman is a race peculiar to England, general civilization is nowhere else sufficiently advanced to create it. Landed proprietors do in other countries occasionally visit their estates, and in Germany, and Hungary especially, we can testify that their establishments are often little inferior to our own. But a residence in the country is always more or less a visit, and not as with us made every year. It is looked upon as a duty and a sacrifice which must be made every now and then—in short, it is not a home. In Russia it is an exile, and is often inflicted by the Emperor as a punishment. Every one goes, it is true, into the country during some part of the summer, where his property is not too far distant from one of the two capitals, but obligation alone would induce the generality of noblemen to spend a whole year there. The communications are bad, and the distances immense; all articles of luxury and many of the necessaries of life must be brought so far as greatly to

increase their cost, and society must often not be thought of.

We passed two days very agreeably, notwithstanding all this, at Makatelum, and after an early dinner the $\frac{1}{13}$th of September, proceeded on our route towards Orenburg. We got into the main road again at Azamas, a small town about twenty miles distance, and reached Simbirsk the following morning.

Simbirsk is a large and improving town; the buildings are almost all modern, although it boasts one of the oldest monasteries in Russia. It is the residence of the governor of the province, the *maréschal* of the *noblesse*, and the winter metropolis of the provincial gentry. The situation of the town is good, being placed on an eminence above the river, which is much wider here than at Murom. The weather was remarkably fine, and the view much more picturesque than anything we had yet met with. The eye follows the winding of the river for many miles, and there was more bustle and movement than we were accustomed to. We loitered here a couple of hours, tempted by a brighter sun than was usual in this rainy summer. On leaving the town you descend for some distance to a well-cultivated plain, where in the course of the day we came to the residence of a Mr. Davidof, one of the richest proprietors in Russia, and who was educated in Edinburgh under the auspices of Sir Walter Scott. His wife, a charming person, is the daughter of the late Prince Bariatinski, who married a sister of Lord Sherborne's. Mr. Davidof had learned, if not a taste for a country life, at least the advantage of overlooking his bailiffs, and had banished himself here with his family

for some time for that purpose. We had already lost so much time, that we were obliged to decline his hospitality, being anxious to get on to Orenburg, before reaching which we knew we had to pass the Volga at a dangerous point in bad weather, and there were already indications of a storm.

The Volga forms almost the boundary of the governments of Orenburg and Simbirsk, and is at this point above a verst wide. We arrived at its banks about seven o'clock in the evening, and found that it had blown so hard all day, that they had not ventured to cross: the wind, however, had dropped a little, and we lost no time in embarking our carriage on the most fragile and rickety of all rafts. The wind was against us, and the stream very rapid; we carried a large sail which made us top-heavy, and were continually obliged to tack. On an open raft there is very little to prevent both carriage and horses from going overboard, and the latter did not at all like their position. The passage occupied us an hour and a half, and we were well pleased to find ourselves again on *terra firma*. We are surprised that General Perofski, the governor of the province of Orenburg, who frequently passes to and from Petersburg, should not have organised a better machine. The weather doubtless makes a great difference, but arrangements ought to be made to ensure a safe transit at all seasons.

We fondly flattered ourselves that our difficulties were over for the present, but on reaching a little town a few versts from the river, where we were to change horses, we were again called upon for an exercise of patience and philosophy. Generally speaking, in the

towns and on the great roads, the postmasters are *chinovniks* or *employés* of government; off the main line there is one only at every fourth station. These functionaries, elated by the little brief authority derived from the uniform they wear, are very apt to display it at the traveller's expense. Being a degree or two higher in rank than a peasant postmaster, their wants are greater, and their salary more inadequate to supply them. The consequence is, that a pretext must be found for extorting a bribe from the traveller, who is too often at their mercy. After a little practice, we became such adepts in distinguishing between the ordinary and extraordinary postmasters, that we were not obliged to ask the question. Whenever there was any delay or difficulty, it invariably occurred when there was one of these official tyrants. We fell into the hands of a *coquin* of this description on the present occasion, who made us wait three hours for horses. Our companion laid his case before the superior dignitary in the town, but we got no redress, and though there was very little doubt that the postmaster had only detained us in hopes of a bribe, it was decided that to make a formal complaint to a higher tribunal would only have involved us in more trouble than the affair was worth. Here and elsewhere the ends of justice are too often defeated by the difficulty and expense of obtaining it. The usual plan is to take the law into your own hands, and thrash the postmaster till the horses make their appearance, and we consider it a necessary and justifiable mode of proceeding.

We were at length once more in movement, but our companion's bile had been so excited, that he

amused us the whole night by recounting the numerous instances which had come under his own observation of the truth of this, and we fear that before Russia can boast any real moral improvement, something more must be done to purify the fountain of justice. Bribery and corruption are in fact such a component part of the financial scheme of every *employé* in that country, that were we to believe implicitly the Russians themselves, we should doubt whether an honest man, in the English acceptation of the word, is to be found. Public opinion attaches no stigma to this sort of dishonesty—it ceases to be dishonest from its very prevalence. We are much inclined to think that this want of public opinion is Russia's great *desideratum*, and little as we would be the advocates of a licentious press, we have never known public opinion to exist in any country in Europe, where the press is not more or less free.

That the fear of punishment does not deter men is quite clear, for the Emperor has done all in his power to put a stop to these bad practices by threats and severe penalties. Conscience, also, unfortunately, is no check, for every individual who enters the service binds himself by the strictest oath not to receive any pay, emolument, or gratuity, in any shape, beyond his monthly salary. When his present Majesty came to the throne, he raised all the salaries considerably, in order to remove the excuse of their being inadequately paid. The evil has not diminished. Neither do we consider the argument brought forward in so many works on Russia, as to the inadequacy of the pay of the *employés*, is just or valid. That it is not the cause

of the evil, is proved by the fact of the man who receives from the Emperor twenty thousand roubles a year, being as great a robber as the one who has only two hundred.

But compare the salaries in general with those of our own country, and we think the balance will be against us. The great difference, however, is this, that an exciseman, or custom-house clerk, or a tax-gatherer, in England, gains no rank from such an appointment. He remains precisely where he was before in the scale of society. But in Russia, every man employed in the service of government belongs to a class, of which there are fourteen. A boy, from the moment he enters the *corps de cadets*, or the university, belongs to some one of the fourteen classes, and as he rises in them, his ideas and wants rise too. We have been told by persons themselves, that they lived respectably and took their degree at the University of Moscow, on three hundred roubles (fifteen pounds English) a year, they being as students in the last class. Having distinguished themselves by taking a good degree, they were, on leaving college, promoted to the ninth class, and were very soon in possession of an appointment of five or six thousand roubles a year. But now, forsooth, having reached the eighth class they become noble, and their views have so expanded with their rank, that the five thousand roubles are insufficient for them, though a year or two before they had been perfectly contented with three hundred. The difference must be made up by extortion. And so far the salaries are inadequate, because every man has a fictitious rank, which he has in no other country of Europe.

China furnished the model for this ennobling system. But place these same individuals in the same situations in England, and they would find that they could live honestly on their pay. Although the penalties are very severe, this species of dishonesty is, comparatively, but seldom punished. Every individual is but a link in the general chain, and when the subordinate robs in small things, the superior generally does it *en gros*. There is a reciprocity of interest in screening each other's peccadilloes, which protects the little man from being informed against by the great one, and we believe the Emperor would have a difficult task, were he to take cognizance of all the delinquencies even in high places. We know there are bright and honourable exceptions, but we fear they *are* the exceptions, and not the rule.

Where a traveller's passport does not show that his rank is such as to command respect, these post-masters are as insolent and over-bearing, as they are servile in the other case. In general no one below the rank of colonel is likely to meet with much courtesy, but many officers of a lower rank do take the law into their own hands, and threats and a horse-whip frequently produce a miraculous delivery of post-horses. We had never recourse to these means, however, and were on the whole very fortunate in being very rarely unnecessarily delayed.

About a hundred miles before he reaches the town of Orenburg, the traveller becomes aware of his approach to the Steppes. The country is still cultivated, and is in fact one of the most productive parts of Russia. But the forests have ceased, and there being

no inclosures of any sort, the eye wanders over a boundless plain, which, after the corn is got in, has nothing to mark that it is either cultivated or inhabited. We have often wondered, as we have done too in Sicily, where the tillers of the ground find shelter for the night.

We halted one day short of Orenburg, at the little village of Pakrofka, where we found a detachment of artillery, which we saw manœuvred. They were marching from Orenburg into their winter quarters. The Russian artillery is very good, and particularly the horse artillery, though we rather fancy a visit to Woolwich would cure some of our friends of that service of a little of their conceit. They themselves consider it their best arm, and perhaps *the* best in the world. An old English cavalry officer told the Emperor, in our hearing, that, with the exception of the household brigade, he thought we had nothing to compare with any of his regiments of cavalry, the number of the cavalry of the guard alone being fifty thousand. His Majesty was pleased with the observation, which really was not meant as a mere compliment, and said they certainly had made great improvement in the last few years.

The horses of the cavalry of the guard cost in reality as much as our own, and horses should be cheaper one would imagine in Russia. We were told by perhaps the best authority in Russia, that all the cavalry of the army is almost equally well mounted. It is a heavy tax upon the officer who is selected by each regiment to purchase these horses, and is another instance of how little importance is attached to the

obligation of an oath, from the habitual system of breaking it with impunity. Each regiment chooses one or two officers every year to purchase troop-horses, for the performance of which service they have a year's leave of absence, during which they are supposed to be looking out for horses in the interior, at the great fairs and breeding establishments. Government allows two hundred and fifty roubles per horse, about twelve pounds, ten shillings, and the officer who has the *remonte*, as well as the colonel of the regiment, takes an oath not to spend any money of his own. When the complement is made up, and they are inspected, the officer and colonel again take an oath that they have not paid more than the government price, whereas it has probably cost each of them ten thousand roubles of his own money.

The richest officers are generally chosen for this duty, who in fact are content to pay five hundred a year for leave of absence, and employ dealers to buy the horses. In regiments of the line, where there is nobody who can afford to pay this sort of tax, an officer obtains the *remonte* for several successive years, and then he buys brood mares, and has a regular stud somewhere in the interior, breeds his own horses, and so makes a profitable speculation. We *have* heard of officers, who, on the horses being inspected on parade, when the usual question upon oath is put as to their not having paid more than the sum allowed by government, have asked leave to decline answering it, but such scruples are rare. Now this is a case where the Emperor or Grand Duke Michael might and should interfere. They are as well aware, as every officer in the service, of what is occurring every day, and either

by not exacting a declaration from the officers that they have paid nothing out of their own pockets, or by giving the contract to other parties, might put a stop to so immoral a practice. There is even the nominal punishment of banishment to Siberia attached to the proceeding, which makes the law an absurdity. There have been instances of a poor man, who was unpopular in his regiment, and whom they wished to get rid of, being chosen for the *remonte*. From inability to pay the additional sum required, he cannot accept the appointment, and must leave the regiment. In the cavalry of the guard they generally calculate that the officer pays two hundred and fifty roubles more per horse out of his own pocket, and perhaps the colonel one hundred, so that every troop-horse costs in reality six hundred roubles, or thirty pounds, and therefore more than the average of our own.

We usually travelled night and day; Russians always do so. Be the accommodations better or worse where you may chance to stop, beds are nowhere found, so that in a *dormeuse*, or the common *kibitka* in winter, one has a better sleeping-place than on the floor of a cottage. We carried some tea and sugar, and a small stock of provisions from Moscow, but always found even in the most unfrequented parts tolerable travellers' fare. The *somovar** and cream we never failed to find,

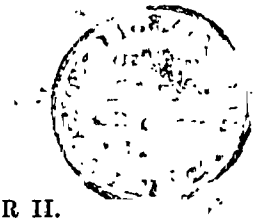
* An urn of the antique form having a funnel down the centre with a grating at the bottom, on which a few pieces of charcoal are placed, by means of which the water is made to boil in two or three minutes, and is kept boiling for any length of time. The teapot may be placed at the top of the funnel, and the flavour of the herb be more completely drawn out and retained for a much longer time than by our made of tea-making, and there is no delay for want of boiling water.

white bread we took with us from town to town, and black bread was always to be had. *Stchee*, as we think a most excellent soup made of cabbage, with generally a good piece of beef in it, is a universal dish, and there is in general a much greater degree of comfort in the peasants' houses than we had expected to find. Abject poverty we nowhere found. We have often seen the labourers and our *yemstchiks* sit down to a copious meal of four dishes, which people of a different class in other countries would be glad to be able to afford.

At Zamarra, a town not far from the Volga, on the border of the government of Orenburg, begins the country of the Cossacks. It is singular how immediately you recognise the difference in the increasing comfort and well-being of the people. Of these there are on the whole Siberian frontier (independent of the Cossacks of the Don) thirty-five thousand. They are a military colony, who have received from government a house and a piece of land, generally as much as they can cultivate, for which they are bound to maintain a horse, and keep their arms in good condition, and always hold a third of their number in readiness for service, whenever they are called upon: a certain number go every year to Petersburg, to form the emperor's Cossack guard, and, after three years, return to their *foyers*. During this time they receive better pay than the rest of the army.

We got to Orenburg at two o'clock in the morning of the $\frac{8}{20}$th of September, and found a very good lodging prepared for us at one of the principal merchants' houses. Instead of keeping a house exclusively for official travellers, the householders in the towns take it

by turns to lodge any officer of the government who may happen to be travelling on the Emperor's service. It is not a heavy tax, and they generally like to display their hospitality, especially to a general, or other person in high authority. Russian merchants, be their wealth ever so great, and their establishments ever so magnificent, rarely inhabit their best apartments: these are kept for any fête or distinguished occasion, and are not occupied perhaps one week in the whole year. It puts them consequently to little inconvenience taking in a traveller, especially as they receive notice beforehand of his intended arrival. We have been sometimes, in travelling with a governor-general, lodged in perfect palaces. At Orenburg we had a very comfortable, clean apartment.



CHAPTER II.

Description of Orenburg.—Inhabitants of the Steppes.—Kirghis.—Trade with them.—Russian Expedition to Khiva.—General Perofski.—General Molostof.—Reciprocal Judgments of Russians and Englishmen of each other.—Russian Manufactures.—War in the Caucasus.—Society of Orenburg.—Mr. Khanikof.—Captain Abbott.—Count Simonich.—Lieutenant Yikovich.—Sir R. Shakespear.—Frontier Route.—Russian Fortresses.—Ural River.—Escort.—Ural Mountains.—Guberlinski Range.—Orska.—Troitska.—Description of the Steppes.—Camels.—Siberian Frontier, two hundred versts beyond Troitska.

ORENBURG, as a town, has no particular feature to distinguish it. It has a strong wall and gate on the European side, by which we entered; but its eastern front is weak and unprotected. When in the possession of the Tatars, it had a sort of fortification, but not against artillery; it consists of not a very high mound, which served as a rampart against the sudden entry of light horsemen, and remains in pretty much the same state now. The streets are regular, and the houses well built; the greater part are of wood, but a very good substantial palace is building for the governor. There are still many remains of the old Tatar habitations, and a large caravanserai, where these wandering traders deposit their goods on their road to and from the fair of Nijni. But Orenburg has a very striking appearance from its situation on the very edge of the desert.

Here the Steppes commence, which extend southward and eastward along the Chinese frontier, and to Bokhara and Turkistan. It seems to be the spot

where civilization ends, and where, instead of having a fixed dwelling and settled home, man begins to be a wanderer, without a country, or anything he can call his own, but his steed and his flocks. A small river runs at its feet, close beyond which is a garden belonging to the governor, and a wood containing some fine timber; excepting this, not a vestige of cultivation is to be seen as far as the eye can stretch on the Asiatic side. Here we saw, for the first time, the long lines of camels arriving with their burdens from the East, and vast caravans, composed of sledges drawn by horses and oxen, proceeding towards Europe. But the population of Orenburg is of the most motley and extraordinary description: its Nomade inhabitants are vastly more numerous than the stationary ones, and are composed of Tatars, Kirghis, and Bokharians, who have very little resemblance to each other in language, dress, or features. We use the word Tatars, because they are generally so called when the Mongol tribes are meant to be designated, but the Russians never so call them; they understand by this denomination the whole great Turkish family, from whom so many of the erratic nations derive their origin.

Anything so savage and inhuman, as the Kirghis in their appearance, cannot well be imagined. Their ugliness is beyond anything we have seen among Mongols, Calmucks, Yakuts, or any of the Nomade tribes which inhabit the eastern parts of Siberia and the Mongolese deserts. The district over which they roam has not inaptly been called "*No man's land*" in a late periodical, although we think the time is not far distant when it will be absorbed in the vast dominions

of their leviathan neighbour. Whether they were one consolidated nation, who fell beneath the power of Ghenghis Khan, or whether they are the *débris* of various tribes who were expelled by that conqueror from their dominions, and settled in the Steppes they now inhabit, which offered no temptation to his victorious arms, is difficult to decide. They appear allied to the Mongolese at all events, and would rather seem to have separated from them at different periods of the general migration.

Their Khans (for they are composed of many independent tribes, governed by their own chiefs,) claim a descent from the great Ghenghis himself, but early histories of this wandering people offer few and scanty details of their origin and lineage. It is certain that they are the most numerous of all the Nomade race in this part of Asia; but it is difficult to ascertain anything like their exact numbers. They have been estimated as high as two millions and a half, of whom a small proportion own a doubtful allegiance to the Emperor of Russia. While their number and want of union make them a less formidable enemy to this power, it also renders them impossible to treat with collectively, either as allies or tributaries. Their *auls*, composed of a few *kibitkas*, which are removable at pleasure in a very short space of time, and their numerous herds and flocks, are all that they can call their own. The Khans possess sometimes as many as ten thousand horses, and constantly change their place of residence for the sake of finding fresh pasturage for them. They are almost entirely unaddicted to agriculture, though, through the wide extent which owns

their lordship, there is every variety of climate and soil.

They have much more of the Negro cast of countenance than any other of the tribes we saw in these countries—broad flat noses, very thick lips, and a most unmeaning expression. The hideousness of the women is revolting: the favourite in a family has generally a large ring of gold put through the gristle of the nose, which hangs down below the chin; the weight of this flattens in the bridge of the nose, and is the finishing stroke to complete the *ne plus ultra* of ugliness, which nature had not left much room to increase. We have never seen anything so disgusting except in the engravings to Arago's *Tour round the World*. The common Tatar countenance is by no means so bad as we expected, and the features of the Bokharians are often fine.

The costume of the Kirghis of rank is picturesque, and not unlike the *festa* dress of the Roman peasants, excepting that the trowsers are long, very large, and loose. Over these they wear high leathern boots, inlaid with a sort of mosaic work of different colours and the same material, into which the trowsers are stuffed. The jacket and trowsers are made of black plush, often very richly embroidered, and covered with buttons of silver and occasionally of gold, fastened by a girdle of cut velvet, into which their arms are stuck. The cap is fantastic, high, and conical. In their intestine wars they rarely use fire-arms, and show the utmost dread of artillery.

On market-days especially, Orenburg seems peopled with them; and towards evening they are to be seen

in great numbers, supping in the open squares, where their trade is carried on. They buy mutton at the lowest imaginable price, which is fortunate, from the stories told of their voracity. But immense as is the quantity they are capable of devouring after long abstinence, they are able to go a very long time without food. When on an expedition, their sole nourishment consists of the *kumiss*, a sour composition made of mares' milk, which is put into a leathern bag, and hung at their saddle-bow. On this they can exist a fortnight; but then, if a sheep falls into their hands, little of it is left. They are exceedingly particular, those, at least, who have not had much communication with the Russians, about eating anything killed by one who does not profess their religion; nor do they allow him to cut it up when dead. Mutton is here so little valued as an article of food, that a whole sheep may be bought for a rouble. There are immense flocks in the Steppes, which are kept solely for the tallow and wool, which gives a disagreeable flavour to the meat; you never, in fact, see it at a gentleman's table on that account.

The religion of the Kirghis is vague, and its tenets not well defined, though it approaches nearer to Mahometanism than anything else, and their ignorance, and consequently their superstition, excessive. The commerce carried on with the different roaming traders at Orenburg is very considerable. As everything that comes from Thibet and Bokhara for the fair of Nijni passes by this town, whatever is not disposed of there, is sold here on the return of the caravans. There is a large caravanserai of brick just built for the Bashkires

a little out of the town, and the old one in it is surrounded by shops and large warehouses where the merchandise and camels are housed. The Kirghis bring a great quantity of hides to market, and particularly the skins of foals untimely ripped from their mother's womb, which are highly prized, and make excellent pelisses, both as to warmth and appearance.

Orenburg had an interest for us, from being the point from whence the famous expedition to Khiva in 1839 set out, and where we expected to hear something like truth upon the subject. Much has been written in French and English periodicals about it, and rarely has so much exaggeration and ignorance been displayed in treating any matter of so little real importance. The *Allgemeine Zeitung* was the only publication in Europe that gave the facts and true details of the whole affair; and we, at least, have confidence in the impartiality of the statements of its correspondent, with whom we happen to be acquainted. French newspapers have been quoted by English reviewers, as trustworthy sources of information, and articles full of elaborate details from their reporters, (who, of course, were in General Perofski's tent) but which savour more of having been put together in the editor's cabinet, appeared one after another to frighten Europe to arms. Khiva was repeatedly stated to be in possession of the Russians, who had not even deigned to linger there, but were in full march to beard us at Herat. Nothing less than the fate of British India depended on the success of this feat of arms, and now the road to Calcutta was to lie through Khiva, instead of Constantinople.

Boldly as these assertions had been made, and signally as they had been disproved, Russian ambition was still the bugbear of party writers, none of whom had the honesty to confess that for once they had been mis-informed. When the position was no longer tenable, the discovery at last was made that the expedition had failed. Its very failure, however, instead of disarming editorial abuse, only added to its malignity. They might surely have spared a fallen foe; but it was necessary to insult her fall by exaggerating her losses, and attributing them to want of skill in the general who conducted the expedition. He was, forsooth, a young man of no merit, who owed his appointment to this arduous service, to his being a favourite of the Emperor's; as if, when India was on the hazard of the die, a man of talent and experience would not have been selected to play for it. As we shall state hereafter our authority for the account we are going to give of this wonderful affair, we have the more confidence that it will receive the credit we ourselves attach to it.

Khiva is distant about six hundred English miles from Orenburg, the road lying through a Steppes inhabited by tribes of Turcomans hostile to Russia. The difficulty of obtaining a supply of water was so great, that the winter was selected as the least unfavourable season for making the expedition. No arrangement which foresight could suggest, or money could complete, had been omitted, and though the distance is so trifling, so convinced was the Emperor of the difficulties they had to encounter, that he applied to the Duke of Wellington for his opinion as to how the enter-

prise had been conducted. Although the Duke had certainly never been in any country exactly of this description, his Indian experience had taught him to form so accurate a judgment of what the principal impediments, which were not easy to be surmounted, would be, that in his reply to the Emperor, he gave, as his opinion, that the expedition had failed, solely from causes which were beyond his control.

The numbers of the troops engaged in this undertaking were very much over-stated in the *Commerce*, and other French accounts; but it was certainly more than ample for the resistance they met with. Twelve thousand camels were employed to carry the baggage and *matériel*, and when the snow became very deep, these unfortunate and much-enduring beasts perished miserably from being unable to scrape with their feet down to the grass, without which food they cannot live. The convoy set out by seven o'clock every morning, and the days being very short, generally halted by two, at which time they often had not advanced above two versts. The time lost in clearing away the snow, and pitching the tents, was so great, that the general, who never dined till he saw everything in order, frequently did not retire till midnight. The cold, in the meantime, was excessive; so much so, that a flask of Irish whiskey, which hung by the general's bedside, often froze. The first time that this occurred, he accused his servant of allowing some one to steal it, thinking the flask was empty. The moaning of the camels was described to us as pitiable; they perished one after another, till, we believe, not a hundred, if any, ever returned to Crenburg.

The expedition was absent five or six months, and did not get much beyond the Emba, a river which forms the nominal Russian frontier, and not much above one-third of the distance they had to perform. During all this time they had but one skirmish with an enemy, who was soon satisfied with a few rounds of grape-shot, which, however, only killed two persons. The Russians, though they lost all their camels, did not lose half a dozen men or horses; and we have heard a General of Cossacks give it as his opinion, that if only Cossack horses had been used, instead of camels, they might have succeeded in reaching Khiva.

The commander of the expedition was General Perofski, the governor of Orenburg, a province larger than France, and one requiring the most active and able head to manage it successfully. We made his acquaintance in the summer of 1840 at the reviews at Krasno Selo, and should imagine him to be a man of five-and-forty; one who has seen a great deal of service, and whom we heard invariably highly spoken of. When the failure of the expedition was known at Petersburg, and the general was summoned to give his account of it, it was commonly supposed he would fall into disgrace. It was, however, so far from being the case, that General Roccasofski, who was governor of Orenburg in his absence, told us that he had seen the Duke of Wellington's letter to the Emperor, which he forwarded to General Perofski on his return, and on which he had written that it was the greatest eulogium that could be passed on him, inasmuch as he had only failed from impediments, which the Duke had given his opinion were insurmountable. He added,

moreover, that the general had done all that a good man and able commander could have effected under the circumstances—he had saved his army; and we know that such an opinion, coming from such a quarter, had the greatest weight in St. Petersburg, and was received with the greatest gratitude by the person most interested in it. General Molostof, an officer who had spent the greater part of his life out of Russia as aide-de-camp to the Prince of Würtemburg, who returned about this time from Germany, asked the Emperor's leave to accompany the expedition as a volunteer. We dined *tête-à-tête*, and went out shooting several times with him during our stay at Orenburg, and from him we heard the details as above stated.

It may well be supposed that neither the Emperor nor the General Perofski could be otherwise than disappointed by the failure of the scheme. It had cost a large sum of money, and the *amour propre* is naturally wounded by want of success. General Perofski is a natural son of the late Prince Razumofski, and is said to be ambitious of being created a Count; it is even reported that he received a sealed packet from the Emperor, which he was to open in the town of Khiva, and which contained the patent of Count and the order of St. George. But in cases of this kind all sorts of rumours will naturally be in circulation. We are simple enough to believe that the real object of the expedition was the nominal one, that of getting back their prisoners, and putting a stop to the *brigandage* which the Khan of Khiva had long connived at, if not encouraged. Nor do we think the occupation of Khiva

the key to British India on one hand, or that the want of success of this campaign has weakened the *prestige* of Russia in Central Asia. The Emperor might very naturally prefer to gain his purpose by his own means, without the assistance of our friend Captain Abbott, or Sir R. Shakespear. Still we do not see any great cause of quarrel against him, that in stating in the Gazette of Petersburg the re-establishment of pacific relations with the Khan he has not proclaimed General Perofski's ill success, and his thanks for British intervention. We can believe it possible, even, that he was *not* particularly grateful for it. In our intercourse with Russians we have been struck with two points of similarity between the general impressions in England and Russia, about each other. We attribute to them ambitious projects and plans of aggrandizement, in support of which idea we appeal to history—the Russians use precisely the same language with regard to us, and appeal to the history of India. We give their agents and diplomatists credit for superior talent and skill in manœuvering; they think that we succeed much better than themselves in gaining our points.

Mutato nomine, de te
Fabula narratur.

On the whole we think they are not so wrong, for we believe our objects are pretty much the same, viz., the extension of our commerce, though there is "ample space and verge enough" for us both, without encroaching on each other's field of action. Although, from the account a late writer on Russia has given of General Raiefski's Indian views, it would seem that there are exceptions to the rule, we have invariably heard con-

centration preferred to extension. We are half inclined to think that the general was amusing himself at Captain Jesse's expense after all, for the language held to us has always been that of deprecating the folly of attempting to increase, geographically, an empire already too vast and disjointed, still less of attempting anything so Quixotic as the conquest of India.

The rivalry of Russia is more formidable in a commercial than a territorial point of view, but our security *now* is, and will continue to be so for a good many years to come, that we can undersell her, and with articles of a superior quality. Believing then, as we do, that she will neither attempt to wrest India from us by arms or artifices, so neither can we be brought to entertain any serious alarm about her ruining our commerce in the East. We will go even farther—we think her attempt to rival our manufactures impolitic. Russia, from the low scale of her population, has no hands to take away from agriculture, and would gain infinitely more by improving the cultivation of those lands now under tillage, and introducing the plough into the millions of acres now lying waste, and perfectly capable of repaying the labours of the husbandman, than by increasing her manufactories, as she has done for the last ten years. We do not mean to underrate the progress they have made, for it is very great, but we doubt the advantage to be derived from it. There is but one class in Russia itself, and that not a very numerous one, whose ideas are sufficiently luxurious, and means ample enough to purchase manufactured articles of a very superior quality. There is

no middle class. High as is the duty, and it has been considerably raised again lately, on English manufactured goods, this one class, in spite of the high price, use nothing else. And if these were positively prohibited altogether, they would still be smuggled in, and used as much as now. But the Russian manufactured article, though not so good as ours, costs very nearly as much; they, therefore, can never compete with us in the foreign market. It may be a question with a British statesman whether it is not for the benefit of the revenue to lower our scale of duties, but it never can be so to the Emperor of Russia, because the same amount of British goods will be imported, be the duty high or low; so that any lowering of the tariff would produce a corresponding loss to his exchequer. We know that amount has diminished, because they manufacture for themselves more than they did ten years ago, and because Russian-made articles are now sold in Petersburg, as English ones; but for the reasons we have assigned, we do not think it will fall off any further.

The reduction of the corn duties may be desirable for many other reasons, or may not, we will not enter into that question, but we will defy any Ambassador at the Court of Russia, or Minister for Foreign Affairs at home, be he ever so great a repealer, to say, that, though the Russians may be glad enough to use the high duties on corn as an argument for not lowering their tariff, they have ever promised to reduce the one, when we reduce the other. But the principle which Russia is following up of making herself independent of English manufactures, is widely different from ours, of

making ourselves independent of her, for a supply of corn. She can have no fear, even in the event of war, of our failing to supply her, and her wealthy nobles have a strange prejudice in favour of everything English, whereas, it is an incontestible fact, that in time of peace she can only afford us a very limited proportion of the corn we require, and if we had it of our own, no one would have any desire of seeking it elsewhere. We would suggest to those whose constant theme is Russian aggrandizement, just to consider whether on reviewing our transactions in India, for the last seventy years, there may not be some ground for their retorting on us; and we are convinced that the word "Algeria" might furnish the same hint to our neighbours on the other side the British channel. The term "unavoidable expansion" has been applied to our Indian Empire, and we admit its aptitude in the fullest extent. The Russians can use it with equal justice as regards the Caucasus and Georgia—the difference is, as we said before, that we succeed better than they do, in spite even of reverses in Affghanistan, caused by the imbecility of the projectors and executors of the insane project of crossing the Indus, to counteract Russian intrigues.

It is no part of our purpose to go into a lengthened argument as to the probability of Russia attacking us on our Indian frontier, or of her seizing Khiva for that purpose, did she meditate it. We would only say, that, though Russian newspapers do not discuss these points as English ones do, people do occasionally express an opinion on the subject, and that the views of others about ourselves are not always so favourable

to us as our own. We hope we shall not create any alarm by stating, that, a few days before we reached Orenburg, another small detachment, composed of two hundred and fifty men, and a couple of pieces of artillery, actually set out in the same direction as the one the year preceding. It was probably to reconnoitre, and perhaps ascertain, the practicability of marching through the Steppes in summer. We have never yet seen this stated in any periodical; and it is even, perhaps, not known yet in Europe, and no new theories have yet been built upon it. At all events, the force is not sufficiently imposing to allow of the supposition, that it is destined for dethroning the Khan of Khiva, or even the invasion of British India*.

Orenburg is said to be a very gay place in winter, and possess an agreeable society. We had not much opportunity of judging, as the greater part of its inhabitants had not yet come back from their summer quarters. We regretted the absence of General Perofski, who was still at Petersburg, but were most hospitably received by General Roccasofski, the governor *ad interim*. General Molostof, whom we have before mentioned, was very kind to us: he and a Mr. Khanikof, a young man belonging to the bureau of

* Since the above was written, Sir Richmond Shakespear has published his journal of the Khivan affair in *Blackwood's Magazine*, and he there confirms our own opinion as to the number of the troops sent by the Emperor, under General Perofski, to accomplish what British intervention was destined to do for them. He states positively that the expedition did not consist of more than ten thousand fighting men, instead of the immense force which most of the periodicals have fixed, according as the fancies of the writers inclined them to view the matter though a smaller or larger magnifying glass.

foreign affairs, who was also a volunteer in the Khiva expedition, were the only other acquaintances we made there. The latter was an amusing specimen of rising Russian diplomacy, unfettered by the *convenances* of European etiquette. He proved to us, moreover—what we were, indeed, previously well aware of—that the education and acquirements of persons of this class in Russia are of a very superior order to those of our own *attachés* and foreign-office clerks. An extensive knowledge of languages and geography, considerable skill as a draughtsman and mappist, added to an intimate acquaintance with the whole diplomatic history and relations of the East, render a young man like this much more than a match for any agents we may have in those parts. And this is one of the great reasons why we hear so much of what are called Russian intrigues. Whatever negotiations they may happen to be carrying on, are conducted by persons educated for the purpose, and thoroughly *au fait* of the matter; we need not, therefore, wonder that they sometimes over-reach us. That they may be, also, more unscrupulous in the means they use to accomplish their purpose, we do not mean to deny; but the skill and information of their agents is also greater than that of ours. The notions of this young man with regard to Captain Abbott were very amusing, and gave us some insight into what Russian agents of that sort are, and how they are sometimes treated by their own government.

Captain Abbott, after his disasters in returning from Khiva, had been detained a couple of months at the Russian fort of Nov-Alexandrofski, in the neigh-

bourhood of the Caspian Sea, by the commandant, in consequence of his having no passport. He dared not let him proceed without communicating with Petersburg, and ascertaining whether he was the person he represented himself to be. When a satisfactory answer arrived, (during which delay his wounds had had time to heal,) he proceeded to Orenburg, where he staid some little time, and, as he himself told us, was treated by General Perofski like a son. As he did not intend coming to Europe when he left Khiva, and would probably not have done so but for his encounter with the brigands in the Turcoman Steppes, he was unprovided with a passport, which, under the circumstances, he would have lost at all events. This, however, was not a sufficient answer for our diplomatic friend, whom it was even difficult to convince that he was not a spy, and that our embassy at Petersburg had not disowned him. He was a little staggered in his persuasion when we assured him that we had been presented together to the Emperor, and that his Imperial Majesty was very gracious in inquiring about the misadventures he had met with. It seemed very improbable to him, nevertheless, that he could be anything but a spy, and that he should be recognised by the British minister as a British officer charged by the Governor-general of British India with the execution of a difficult and dangerous mission. Captain Abbott is a very distinguished officer of artillery, in the service of the East India Company; and to his skill we are indebted in a great degree for our success at Ghuzni. We hope he has been adequately remunerated, if that is possible, for the wounds he

received in returning from this mission to the Khan of Khiva.

This puts us in mind of the affair of Count Simonich at Herat, and the sudden and mysterious death of Lieutenant Vikovich at Petersburg. Here were two fertile themes for the French and English press to make a handle of for abuse of Russia. Unwilling ever to give her credit for sincerity in anything, they over and over again asserted that the Russian government disowned the conduct of Count Simonich at Herat, and dismissed him from his post, the better to cloak their nefarious plans, and only to reward him by a better appointment at a convenient season. The mysterious death of the other officer, who had been also employed at Herat, was imputed to another diabolical act of vengeance, because he had not succeeded in his manœuvres. We happen to know, that Count Simonich is in disgrace to this day, and that he will probably remain so to the hour of his death. He has been appointed to the command of a small fortress, not yet built, in some unimportant place, which is tantamount to banishment. If half that is said of the fortune he has amassed be true, we wonder he does not endeavour to leave Russia for ever. He was in his youth a French prisoner, and taught that language at Casan; but, being a man of real talent, made himself known, and entered the Russian service. He had had a brilliant career, but his avarice and extortion were so great, and his conduct at Herat so much disapproved—the circumstances connected with which only became known to the Emperor when the British government complained of him—that he was immediately recalled.

We do not doubt that the Russian Government wished well to Dost Mahommed, and better would it have been for us if we had entertained similar views; and we know that this very Lieutenant Vikovich was sent with ten thousand ducats to him as a subsidy, but they never authorized their ambassador to command his troops against a British army. And this is still even not generally believed in Russia; for though a Russian general once talked to us of the affair of Herat being one of the most brilliant feats of arms Great Britain ever performed, he in some degree attributed it to the want of an officer of any talent on the other side, and would not be brought to believe that a man of Simonich's abilities would have allowed them to be so shamefully beaten.

An intimate friend of Vikòvich's, who saw him the day before he committed suicide, told us that it will always remain a mystery why he destroyed himself. His history was a singular one. He was by birth a Pole, and was banished to Orenburg as a private soldier. When Baron Humboldt was travelling in those parts, he happened to stop at the cottage he inhabited, and was surprised to find his own works in French lying upon the table. He had some conversation with the young man, and promised to speak to the Emperor in his favour on his return to Petersburg. He did so, and Vikovich was soon after made an officer, and being very active and clever, he was constantly employed by General Perofski to command reconnoitering parties in the Steppes of the Kirghis. He was subsequently sent on the mission to Herat, and is supposed to have been acquainted with some of Simo-

nich's secrets. He was, however, so far from sharing his disgrace, that our informant told us he had had a new uniform made, and was to have been presented to the Emperor for promotion the very day on which he committed suicide. The idea was that he had had an altercation with Simonich the day before his death, and that in a fit of pique he terminated his existence.

Mr. Shakespear was expected at Orenburg two or three days after we left it. The governor received a letter from him while we were there, to announce his arrival at Nov-Alexandrofski with the Russian prisoners from Khiva, whom he had promised to escort back to their own country. His letter was written in English, and was almost wholly unintelligible to the learned of Orenburg. As an English traveller is not likely to be on the spot to interpret again perhaps in this century, it would be as well for an agent of that sort to be able to write French. We perceive he has since been knighted, but hope that Captain Abbott has received some more solid reward for his services. We were sorry not to be able to wait for his arrival, as he would doubtless have had something interesting to relate about Khiva and the Steppes journey. But we had a long Steppes journey to make ourselves, and were anxious to get as far as possible before winter set in.

We left Orenburg with the intention of following the line of small towns, or rather villages dignified with the name of fortresses, because they contain a small detachment of artillery, which form the boundary of the Russian territory on the Steppes of the Kirghis. Sometimes in a small village, only five men are stationed with a single gun, in others considerably more.

In every case the utmost regularity is maintained, the depôt of arms in most excellent order, and everything in conformity with the Russian discipline, which is the strictest in Europe. It is not easy to say what number of guns there are on the whole frontier line up to Nertchynsk, but we have no doubt that three hundred pieces of artillery might, on the shortest notice, be brought to any given point. The roads are good, and horses in abundance, so that the transport would be easy. Many of the guns are very old, and were sent here in the time of Peter the Great. This eccentric monarch, who sometimes wreaked his vengeance on things inanimate as well as animate, is said to have banished some of the guns to Siberia as a punishment for having failed on some occasion in executing his commands. It is certain, that after his famous escape from shipwreck on the Ladoga Lake, when he took the helm himself, and asked the frightened sailors if they ever heard of a Czar being drowned, he had the waters knouted, and that to this day, in a particular spot and at stated times, the peasants imagine they see them tinged with red from the effects of the knout above a century ago. After this, it is quite credible that he should have exiled the cannon, and perhaps had good reasons for so doing, which he concealed under pretence of punishing them. That these stories should be recorded of Peter the Great, is at least not more extraordinary than that Wallenstein, who did not commit any of the extravagances peculiar to that monarch, should be said to have fired red-hot shot into the Belt, in exasperation that it prevented him from pursuing the Danes any further.

From Orenburg, for several hundred versts, there is no feature in the country worthy of remark. Our road lay close to the small river Ural, which separated us from the Kirghis Steppes, and the general aspect of the plains on the two sides of it was pretty much the same. On our side occasional cultivation and large flocks of sheep and goats gave signs of there being fixed habitations of men, but houses are very rare.

The Ural, though here a small and narrow river, runs a distance of two thousand versts, and falls into the Caspian Sea at Gurief. Its name signifies in Tatar a belt; it was anciently called Rhymnus, and then by the Russians Yaik. It was changed to Ural by an ukase of the Empress Catherine, after the revolt of Pugachéf, which originated in this neighbourhood, in hopes thereby to wipe out the recollection of that event. Here and there, near the water-side, we saw the *kibitkas*, or huts of the Kirghis, who are on terms of friendship with the Russians, and are therefore designated *mirnoi*, or peaceable. Of these, indeed, many have taken the oath of allegiance to the White Khan, as the Emperor is called, and pay a small tribute in the shape of a poll-tax, while others who carry on a considerable trade with Russia, pay a trifling duty on the goods they come to exchange.

Till lately, these lawless marauders were a source of constant annoyance to the Cossacks who live along the frontier. The river is not broad, and in many places easily fordable on horseback, so that these agile light horsemen were continually committing depredations, crossing the river in bodies of fifty together, and carrying off the sheep and cattle. Since General Perofski has

had the government of the province, he has taken active measures for putting a stop to these proceedings, and has completely succeeded in teaching the Nomade robbers the difference between *meum* and *tuum*. This was the more easy, as strange to say they do not possess courage, the virtue common to most barbarous and semi-barbarous tribes. The Cossacks have an unbounded contempt for them, and assured us that half a dozen of themselves are more than a match for fifty Kirghis. They are doubtless much better armed, which makes a vast difference. In their own intestine wars and quarrels, when they fight on equal terms as to weapons, the Kirghis are said not to be such *poltrons*. Intimidation had certainly a great share in calming their ardour for appropriation, but the Russian government has also held out to them the more solid advantages to be gained by peaceful trading, and we doubt not that in a few years the whole of the tribes inhabiting the Russian vicinity will be in effect Russian subjects.

Although we were told that for a year past the road had been perfectly safe, we took an escort during two or three hundred versts. It being furnished at the post gratuitously, we did not, of course, decline it; but if there had been any real danger, nothing could be so absurd as the idea of its being the slightest use to us. The escort was composed of generally two, sometimes three horsemen, as grotesque, and almost as savage-looking as those from whom they were intended to protect us. They were certainly armed up to the teeth; for they carried a carbine, brace of pistols, a cutlass, a bow and arrows, and a lance; but whether the arms were in an efficient state if required to be

used, we very much doubt. That such a display of offensive weapons, of which the Kirghis had learned the force on other occasions, would have been sufficient to alarm them, and have the effect of keeping them on their own side the river, is very probable, but we confess we think we should have run a good chance of being carried prisoners to Khiva, or the Khan of some other equally barbarous tribe, if a tolerably numerous party had attacked us.

The Cossacks told us a story of an affair with the Khirghis a year or two before, in which one of them had taken part. A detachment of these marauders had as usual forded the river in search of booty, but were surprised by one of the watchmen *flagrante delicto*. Being a numerous band, some time was lost in collecting a party to pursue them, for on being detected they retreated in all haste. A much inferior number of Cossacks gave them chase two days and nights into the Steppes; at the end of which time they came up with them, and found them drying their clothes, which had been thoroughly drenched in fording the river. The poor wretches, thus taken by surprise, were all massacred. We have heard many Münchausen stories of the prowess of the Cossacks against these children of the desert. Without taking them quite *au pied de la lettre*, there is little doubt that their physical means of defence and personal courage are far inferior to those of the Cossacks. We frequently saw the gazebos from which the Russians keep a look out for these unwelcome visitors, and as the country is as flat as possible, in clear weather they can see a great distance. Although we were invariably told at the

post-house that there was no longer any danger to be apprehended, at the very station after we dismissed our escort, we heard that only the day before there had been a party of marauders in the neighbourhood, but the fact was not substantiated.

About a hundred versts before reaching Orska, one of the largest fortresses on this frontier, the monotony of the Steppes travelling was broken by a ridge of mountains of most singular form. They are called the Guberlinski range, and are a part of the great chain of the Ural mountains, which extend a vast distance north and south. This long range of mountains runs from Ust-Urt, in the isthmus of the Turcomans, between the Caspian Sea and the Lake of Aral, to beyond the polar circle, a distance of more than two thousand versts. They may be divided into the North, Middle, and South Ural; from them spring the Ural', Kam', and Petschora rivers. They may be said to divide Europe from Asia, though what the Russians call the frontier is now a little to the east of them. The northern part is the coldest district of Europe, and is now almost entirely a desert. Müller is of opinion that it was the country of the Huns and Hungarians. Through the middle division, Lehrberg thinks, went what was anciently known by the name of the "Eiserne Pforte," through which the Novogorodians, then a powerful people, invaded the territory of the Ugrians, at that time thickly populated. Karamsin says even, that they formed a part of North Siberia; and that a portion of Asiatic Russia was tributary to the Novogorodians in the middle ages. The southern parts were once highly cultivated, and

inhabited by a people whose principal occupation was agriculture; and to the extreme south, between them and the Euxine, the Nomades of Asia directed their steps to find an outlet to go to conquer Europe.

There are in Asia four great chains of mountains, which run from east to west, and appear to be of a different formation and origin to those which run north and south. The Ural, Baron Humboldt considers, from its geological appearance, to be a more modern creation than the Himalaya. In the former, bones of the rhinoceros, and many other animals, are found near the surface, mixed with mineral productions, gold, and precious stones. The strata are granite, slate, and chalk, with vast quantities of copper and gold in the neighbourhood of Ekaterinburg, in rich veins interspersed through them. Iron ore and loadstone are also found here in great abundance, with agates, cornelian, amethysts, topazes, jasper, chalcedony, and marble of different kinds. Formerly a yellow alabaster, of which we procured a good specimen, is said to have been common here, but to be no longer found. The Ural was known to the ancients under the name of "Montes Hyperborei," or Riphæi. Their elevation differs considerably, but is nowhere great in proportion to their length. East of the Ob' they are four thousand feet above the level of the sea, and in some parts upwards of six thousand; while in the vicinity of Ekaterinburg the height is very inconsiderable, not exceeding that of the towns of Geneva or Ratisbon. They have a variety of different names in different parts; far north, in the 50° of latitude, they take the name of Werchoturish, from Werchotura, a peak

at the bottom of which the river Tura has its source, where is a great depôt of iron, and other articles of Siberian commerce. Its mineral treasures give employment to vast numbers of workmen, and are a source of great profit to the Crown, as well as many private individuals.

The elevation of the Guberlinski range, where we crossed it, is very trifling, only five hundred feet above the level of the Caspian, though from the flatness of all the surrounding country, it appears to be considerable. The breadth of the chain is much greater at this part, than is usual in mountains of the same elevation; and it remains pretty much the same for a considerable distance, without any material difference in the altitude. Here it is a flat table-land, without peaks or variety of hill and valley, and has a singular appearance, which we have never observed in any other mountains. It gives one the idea of what the sea would be, if petrified instantaneously, when in a state of slight agitation. The undulations are regular and uniform, and the strata in vertical layers, without herbage or sign of vegetation. Salt lakes are frequent all along its neighbourhood from the river Tobole to Saratof and Orenburg, and we saw a great number of beds of natural salt, which have been, perhaps, deposited there by the passage of the sea at some unknown period.

The whole of Siberia offers many indications of the continent having once been covered with water, and these formations may have taken place when the Arctic Ocean retreated within its present limits. It is a fact already established, that a different distribu-

tion of land and water is the most powerful agent in producing a change of climate in the same place under different circumstances; and if, on the retreating of the sea, a considerable elevation of the lowlands took place, this would also be another strong reason for supposing that the temperature of this part of Siberia, and indeed of the whole of it, was formerly much higher than it now is. Much of the difficulty in accounting for the deposits of bones of animals, only known to have habitually frequented countries of a high, or at least moderate temperature, being found here, is thus got over.

We were thirty-one hours in going from Orenburg to Orska, a distance of less than four hundred versts, which is not very expeditious travelling, but the stages were occasionally very long, and the horses found a great difference between dragging a light telĕga, or a Moscow travelling carriage. This little town is, like most of the others on the frontier, composed of one long straight street. All the houses are of wood; there are, as usual in Russia, several churches, a large market-place, and a small barrack for artillery. We slept here in very clean and comfortable quarters; in cold countries of this sort, we infinitely prefer wooden houses, there is no comparison how much warmer they are than houses built of brick. The walls are often two and three feet thick, composed of two large fir trees placed *dos à dos*, without being sawed square into boards. The interstices are very closely filled up with moss and tow, and they are so hermetically sealed as it were, that not a particle of the external air can penetrate them. Double doors

and windows, and stoves of which the fires are hardly ever suffered to go out night or day for months together, render these extremely comfortable habitations.

The following day we proceeded towards Troitska, the next place on our road dignified by the name of a fortress, but in reality a large village where the military are stationed. Our rate of travelling was again not very rapid, the distance, about six hundred versts, occupied us fifty-five hours*. The greater part of this journey lay through a more desert country than any we had yet passed. The want of cultivation, however, does not proceed from the soil being of such a nature, as not to make it worth while to till it, but from the want of population, and a market for the surplus production. Should this part of Russia become thickly populated, perhaps, after a lapse of centuries, the whole of these Steppes may be inclosed, and will doubtless supply the necessities of the inhabitants, however multiplied:—they are even now productive without the assistance of man. A great quantity of long grass grows over the whole surface, which is cut in the summer, and made up into large cocks, and left on the spot for the support of the cattle and sheep in the

* The old road was considerably longer, being much more circuitous and inland as it were. The one we followed, though less interesting, has the advantage of making a great saving of time. It is called the line of the Cossacks, and is one of the encroachments that the Russians have made from time to time on the territory of the Kirghis, and between Orska and Troitska they have now made this tract, so filched from their neighbours, a part of their own dominions. By these apparently unimportant advances southward, they gradually establish themselves nearer to the frontier of Khiva and Thibet.

deep snows of winter. These little ricks serve also as places of shelter for the sheep, who thus find warmth and nourishment at the same time.

It may well seem to the reader that these vast open plains, the monotony of which is hardly ever relieved by a stunted shrub, or tempest-stricken trunk barely rising above their level surface, must present a most dreary and melancholy appearance to the traveller. But there is a something in the very idea of their vastness, which gives them a character of sublimity. The horizon in every direction is the same Steppes, they seem interminable as space, and could the eye scan as far, it would find little or no variety from the foot of the Caucasus, to the frontier of China. They are the personification of solitude on the largest scale, and convey some faint idea, in the long hours of darkness, of what Chaos was. Ever and anon, it is true, a long line of stately camels appears in the distance, and with the large flocks of uncouth, misshapen sheep, troops of half-wild horses, and numerous herds of cattle, recall one to the agreeable sensation, that we are not the only living creatures in this vast wilderness. These rows of camels might here almost be called picturesque.

The camel has an air of majesty in his gait, and his manner of carrying his head and neck impress one with an idea that he must be a proud animal. He is truly an useful and much-enduring one, and, ill as he is often treated, but rarely shows a disposition to exert against the tyrant man the powers which nature has furnished him with. It is well for us that animal instinct is insufficient to teach them how to exercise

their forces to our detriment, or we should speedily lose the lordship over them, which our abuse of it makes us deserve to forfeit. The foremost camel in the string is ridden by the driver, who guides him by means of a large iron ring which is put through his nose, and to which a cord is fastened—a real "bridle in the nose," of a very disagreeable description, by which the neck may almost be jerked out of the position which nature has given it. The other camels follow their leader without the interference of a driver, and when they come to water their burdens are taken off, and we often saw them grazing at liberty like domestic animals.

In the environs of Troitska, the country becomes more wooded, and forests are seen here and there, but of no great extent. The little river Ural which had been our companion almost all the way from Orenburg, here disappears. There seemed to be a great deal of trade going on with the Kirghis at Troitska, and much more bustle and movement than in any other place hitherto on this side of Orenburg; otherwise nothing to distinguish it from the other fortresses, but its increased size and population.

Immediately on leaving the town we crossed another little tributary stream, the Oï, which we followed from time to time as far as Petro-Paulofski, the next fortress of considerable size that we passed through. At about two hundred versts from Troitska we entered Siberia. There was nothing to show that we had passed the frontier, but the most marked difference in the moral and social condition of the inhabitants. Increased comfort and cleanliness in the

houses, with an evident improvement in the finances of the peasants, amounting almost to riches among the Cossacks, was immediately noticeable. The horses, from being better fed, were of course stronger and better able to perform their tasks, so that the rate of travelling increased in proportion. We had no longer any escort, and were told there was no need of guards in Siberia. On the whole we commenced under favourable auspices, and began to suspect we should return to Europe with different ideas from those with which we had left it. Dobell noticed the same difference in his day, and says that he found in the Siberian peasants a sympathy and disinterestedness, that he nowhere else experienced. He mentions having met a carrier conveying goods from Tumen to Tomsk, a distance of fifteen hundred versts, at two roubles and a half the pud, or after our manner of reckoning, thirty-six pounds a thousand miles for less than half-a-crown. On questioning him how he could afford to do it so cheaply, he replied that the people were so kind and hospitable, that the keep of a man and horse per day was not above fifteen *kopéks*, or about seven farthings. He also mentions the case of a soldier who had travelled on foot from Petersburg to Siberia to see his family, who told him that all the money he spent was between Petersburg and Ekaterinburg; that once fairly in Siberia no one would accept a *kopék* for his food or lodging. We can add our own testimony to the probable truth of these statements, so creditable to the character of the peasantry, and indeed of all classes.

CHAPTER III.

Siberia.—Similar Language and Religion.—Ancient History of the Country.—Conquest by the Russians.—Tatars.—Khazars.—Yermak Timoféef.—His Death.—Fire of Tobolsk.—Ancient Remains found.—Different Inhabitants.—Name whence derived.—Old Inhabitants of Perm.—Latitude and Longitude of Siberia.—Area.—Treaty with the Chinese.—Amur.—Albasyne.—Russian Embassy at Peking.—Soil and Climate.—Divisions.—Mines.—Agriculture.—Rivers.—Possible Communication between the Pacific and Baltic by Water.—Land Communication.—Cold more severe the farther East.

SIBERIA is perhaps the least known, though the largest inhabited country in the world under one sceptre, in which the inhabitants speak for the most part the same language, and profess the same religion. To consolidate and keep together so vast an empire as that which owns allegiance to the Emperor Nicholas, nothing contributes so much as a similarity of language and religion. The Emperor appears fully impressed with this truth, and might almost be thought to have adopted that policy from a remark of Gibbon in speaking of the ancient Romans: "So sensible," says he, "were the Romans of the influence of language over national manners, that it was their most serious care to extend, with the progress of their arms, the use of the Latin tongue." From Petersburg to Kamtschatka, a distance of more than thirteen thousand versts, there is no perceptible difference in the language. The Russian, an old Schlavonic dialect, has less *patois* than any living language; the only difference is in a slight provincial pronunciation of some words peculiar to the

Siberians. But the tie of a common religion is still stronger than that of a common language, and far more binding *now* than to the Romans of old, whose Polytheism admitted any form of worship, so long as the number of the divinities was only increased, and no attempt was made to derogate from the attributes of those already existing.

Before the time of the conquest of Siberia by the Russians, little or no authentic history of it remains, and its earlier Russian conquerors gave themselves little trouble on this head. The north-western parts had been overrun by different predatory bands as far as the river Ob', during the reign of Ivan III., or Ivan Vassilivich I., in the latter half of the fifteenth century. These, however, contented themselves with making a few prisoners, and some inconsiderable booty, with which they returned to Moscow, satisfied with the tribute they had exacted from the Tatar tribes who occupied these then inhospitable regions. About the middle of the sixteenth century, the Czar Ivan IV., or Ivan Vassilivich II., surnamed the Threatener, having conquered the kingdoms of Casan and Astracan, determined on possessing himself permanently of Siberia. Long before he had in fact conquered any very considerable part of this vast country, he assumed the title of Czar of all Siberia, which then probably comprised but a very small portion of that now known by this name. By degrees, as the Russian conquests were extended, the conquered countries indiscriminately received the name of Siberia, till at length the whole tract of land from the Ural to Japan, from Tatary to the Arctic Ocean, was known by that one designation,

We have employed the words Tatar and Tatary, because they are generally adopted in speaking of the numerous Nomade tribes of Asia, and the plains they wander over. Properly speaking, the Mongols are the only people who have a right to the name: the Russians give it indiscriminately to the different offsets of the great Turkish family, and it is equivalent to "robber." When Touchi Khan, the son of Ghenghis Khan, conquered all Northern Asia, the different nations who fell beneath his arms were all of Turkish extraction. In the fifteenth century, Casan, Astracan, and the Criméa, were the most considerable Khanats, and were governed by chiefs descended from Ghenghis Khan, and were therefore properly Tatars. The armies, however, as well as language, which they had brought there more than two centuries before, had become extinct, and were made up by people of Turkish origin, indigenous in the soil, and speaking Arabic or Persian as their mother tongue. As these fell under the power of the Russians, they still called them Tatars, because the Khans, though not the people, were so; and thus the name has been commonly continued to all the different tribes who come to trade with them. Tatischef says, "if any one use the word Tatar, however, they do not understand it: they call themselves Turks." The word, in fact, in its Russian acceptation, refers to their condition, and not their origin. In the same manner, they originally gave the name *Nemetski*, which signifies dumb, to all who did not speak their language, and generally to all who were not Christians: it now merely signifies *German;* the name of *Slaves* signifies those who can speak, on the contrary. They are said

to descend from Icklab, the Russians from Russ, two sons of Japhet.

The name of Kirghis is also, in point of fact, improperly applied to those who are now known by it: they should be called *Kazaks*. The Kirghis are a distinct race, and inhabited the neighbourhood of the Yénissei, in the time of Ghenghis Khan, in the very same country where the Russians found them in the beginning of the seventeenth century, and which they did not evacuate till a hundred years afterwards. They are the Burates, to whose Khan, then resident at Khiva, Ghenghis Khan sent one Bura as his ambassador, in the year 1206, to demand tribute. This Khan's name was Inah, who immediately yielded, and paid the tribute demanded.

In the first years which succeeded the conquest of Siberia by the Russians, vast quantities of costly and valuable ornaments were found in the tombs on the banks of the Irtysch and Yénissei. Bracelets of massive gold, and necklaces *à la Pompeiana*, as they are now called, in the shape of serpents, vases, rings, and precious stones. Besides these, a great variety of warlike instruments, sabres with hilts of gold, bucklers, spears, swords, and knives of bronze, with idols and other antiquities of Tatar origin. As these were found intermingled with human bones, it is clear that they were buried with their owners, who observed the custom common to all Eastern people, as well as the Egyptians, of entombing such articles in honour of the deceased; and, as in Egypt, the rank of the individual was determined by the value of the objects found in their burying-places. This custom prevailed

still in the country, when the Russians took possession of it.

Ghenghis Khan was born not far from the present Russian frontier, a short distance from the banks of the Amur, and his capital is supposed to have been situated somewhere between the rivers Yaik (Ural) and Irtysch. The richest tombs have, accordingly, been found in this vicinity; and, with a little stretch of imagination, we might fancy that one, the opening of which is described in the *Russian Archæologia*, may have been that of this celebrated conqueror. The account of it is as follows:—After removing a very deep covering of earth and stones, the labourers came to three tombs, constructed of stones, of rude workmanship. In the centre one, the largest of the three, was deposited a personage of high rank, as was clear from the valuable objects entombed with him. The body lay in a reclining posture, upon a sheet of gold extending from the head to the feet, and another similar sheet of gold was spread over him. He was wrapped in a rich mantle, bordered with gold, and studded with rubies and emeralds. His head, neck, and arms, were naked, without any ornament. On one side of him were his arms, a sword, spear, quiver, bow and arrow; on the other side, his horse, bridle, saddle, and stirrups. In another vault lay a female, recognised by the ornaments she wore. She was reclining against the wall, and had round her neck a gold chain of many links, set with rubies, and gold bracelets on her arms, which, as well as her head and breast, were uncovered. The body was enveloped in a rich robe, but without any border of gold or jewellery, and, like the other, was laid on a sheet of gold, with a similar

one thrown over it. The four sheets of gold weighed forty pounds. The robes looked fresh, and were quite perfect when the tomb was opened, but, on exposure to the outward air, immediately crumbled into dust. Rubruquis, who went to the court of the successor of the great Ghenghis, met there a French jeweller, William Boucher, so that it is probable European workmen were the artificers of these costly articles. From the quantity of ornaments of gold, and various objects of Western manufacture, found by the Russians in these tombs, it is clear that they had a considerable commerce with the West, and especially with the Khazars, from whom they probably learnt their letters.

The Khazars possessed the sovereignty of the country about the Don and Volga, and are known to have been on terms of alliance and friendship with the Emperors of Constantinople. In 858, they begged the Emperor Michael to send them missionaries to teach them Christianity. He, accordingly, sent them Constantine of Thessalonica, who learned their language and converted the whole country. Constantine, at a later period of his life, was called St. Cyril, and is said to have invented the Schlavonic alphabet for the Bulgarians and Moravians, and probably gave it also to the Khazars. The two languages appear to have the same origin, and to be modified one from the other. An old dialect, still extant in some parts of the government of Perm, was introduced there at a little later period, and in the same way. St. Stephen, called *Veliki Permski*, was sent to convert that people, and invented also an alphabet for them, which may fairly be concluded to have had a close

affinity to the other. The Kirghis were called by the Mongols *Hakas;* and, during the Mongolese dominion in this part of Asia, the nations became Mahometans, as their conquerors were, and from them learned the Arabic character and language.

At the time of the invasion of Siberia, of which we are speaking, in the sixteenth century, Kutchum Khan, a lineal descendant of the great Ghenghis, was the most considerable chief of all the independent tribes. His dominions extended from the banks of the Ob' and Irtysch to the Tobole and Tura; and a fort in the vicinity of the present town of Tobolsk, of which some ruins still remain, was his usual place of residence. In the year 1578, Yermak Timoféef, a chief of the Cossacks of the Don, who were then a horde of banditti, had been defeated by the Czar, and driven, with a body of five thousand followers, as far as Orel, where he thought it more prudent to enter into friendly relations with the Russians than continue his ordinary system of brigandage. At the instigation of Strogonof, the governor of Orel, he was soon prompted to turn his arms against Kutchum Khan, whom, after various success on both sides, he at length totally defeated, the loss to both parties being immense in killed and wounded. His victory had, however, cost him dear, for his army was reduced to five hundred men; yet the Tatars, from admiration of his skill and courage, took the oath of allegiance to him, and, from having been a chief of banditti, he found himself all at once a sovereign prince. His former enemy had escaped in the general carnage, and, by creating continued revolts among the tribes, rendered

his situation so precarious, that he determined on throwing himself into the hands of the Czar. Having obtained from him a small reinforcement of troops, he took the offensive, and extended his conquests in the name of the Czar, and for a time all went well with him. Ultimately, however, he was surprised in a moment of security, together with three hundred Russians, by Kutchum Khan, and perished with his followers; on intelligence of which, his remaining troops evacuated Siberia, and for a time Russian dominion there ceased.

Dissensions soon arose among the Tatar tribes, of which the Czar took advantage, and once more invaded Siberia with an army of only three hundred men. They were, however, reinforced, and in a very short time possessed themselves permanently of the whole of Siberia, as far as the frontier of Mongolia, and, indeed, of some part of the present Chinese territory, which the Chinese have subsequently recovered.

The great fire which destroyed Tobolsk, and with it all the archives of the country, has deprived us of much historical information about the earlier times of the inhabitants, and the want of care in preserving them in the other towns has left an *hiatus* which cannot now be filled up. The middle parts of West Siberia were not improbably the *berçeau* of the original colonists of the north of Europe. The Chinese annals relate, that the first symptom of a movement westwards was made from the present territory of the Mandtchus, and this was perhaps the beginning of the general emigration of nations from the river Amur to the pillars of Hercules. Certain very ancient and undecipherable characters have

been found carved on a rock in Southern Siberia, and the very same on a stone in North America. The remains of remote antiquity found in the mines of Nertchynsk, and the mountains in the vicinity of the Baikal and Altai, are proofs that these regions were peopled by a race whose names and existence is unknown. We possess ourselves some remains of very ancient arms found near Irkutsk in a bed of chalk, made of *jade*, a sort of jasper of the hardest kind, probably used by the natives before they had the knowledge of iron. These people subsequently learned it from the Chinese, and arming themselves, easily drove before them the Siberians, who were unable to cope with antagonists who had arms so superior to their own. In this manner the migration northwards and westwards was continued, more easily to the north, because most of the Siberian rivers run northward and fall into the Icy Sea.

The Huns probably themselves came originally from China, and as we have before said, set out from these parts under Attila, to ravage the Western world. The Tatar tribes again succeeded them, and were in their turn finally expelled by the Russians. Thus one nation swept over another, till Siberia became the depôt of small numbers of a great variety of people, who had remained behind in the general movement. Within a short distance of each other we find still Kirghis Kazaks, Kirghis Burates, Kalmucks, Bashkires, and a number of other small tribes. A little further removed from them, the Tonguses, Yakuts, Yukaghires, Ostiaks, Tschuktsches, Samoyédes, and Kamtschadales, with many other people, all or nearly all of them, of different origin and language. Some of these are still

Pagans, others profess the religion of Mahomet, but very few among them are Christians. In spite of these remains of its old inhabitants added to the colonies of Russians who are annually poured into it, the population of Siberia increases but very slowly. It does not exceed three millions, and of these the greater part belong to West Siberia. Its whole surface is twenty-six times times larger than France, according to Humboldt, and the population of the whole Russian Empire in a given space is but as one to two hundred and fifty. In the distant parts of Siberia the small-pox and syphilis make frightful ravages, which, added to the rigour of the climate, and unwholesome description of food which produces scurvy and all sorts of complaints, will prevent any great increase in the population, till something is done to improve their moral and physical condition. This applies principally to those distant parts far to the north of Irkutsk, and with the best intentions the difficulties are very great in the way of any remedy.

Siberia has been supposed to derive its name from Sibir, a Tatar fortress on the Irtysch, not far from Tobolsk. This, however, is not the case, as this fortress was called by the Tatars *Isker*, and the southern parts of the province had been called Siberia by the Russians before they knew of the existence of this fortress. The word *Sibiri* signifies all over Asia the East, sunrise, daylight; and in the Schlavonic language the word means a prison, which probably caused it to be given to the whole country, as well as to the fortress. It originated with the old inhabitants of the government of Perm, of whose language we have before

mentioned the probable derivation. They were a Finnish race, of whom some still retain the most ancient language, now corrupted with some Schlavonic words, but distinct from it, and unintelligible to the rest of the inhabitants. It was a vast empire under the Tchudes, afterwards was called *Biärmaland* and Perm, and fell into the power of Batu, the grandson of Ghenghis Khan. It is very remarkable that a country to the west of the Ural, and consequently European, should still possess a language known only to a small part of its own inhabitants, and unknown to all the rest of the world.

Siberia lies between 45° 30′ and 77° 40′ north latitude, and 60° and 190° east longitude. Its surface covers an extent of more than five million square miles, but neither this, nor its extreme length can be accurately defined, as the Russian frontier is continually being extended further into the Steppes of the Kirghis, and as we shall show hereafter to a much greater distance than we have any idea of in Europe. Eastward the Russian dominions have been somewhat curtailed since the seventeenth century. At that period they comprised the vast country watered by the river Amur or Yamur, signifying in the language of the natives, the great river. The Amur is one of the largest and most widely-extended streams of that part of Asia. From the conflux of the rivers Argun' and Chilka, where it rises, it branches in various directions, during which it receives many tributary streams; and after running a distance of two thousand miles, falls into the Pacific Ocean, opposite the island of Sakhalyne. Its source is the point fixed by the treaty made

between the Russians, by Count Ssava Wladislavich Ragusinski, and the Chinese, as the boundary of the two empires. It waters the territory of the Mandtchus, and towards its extremity that of the Ghilaiks. On its southern banks are some small towns, which are a sort of place of exile for the Chinese.

The Ghilaiks are still entirely Nomades, who live by fishing and hunting. The river abounds with fish, and its neighbourhood with the choicest sables, whose fur is of the most valuable description. The Russians from the province of Yakutsk occasionally meet them in hunting; but little or nothing is known of their origin and language. In the seventeenth century the Cossacks heard from the Tonguses of the Léna of the existence of the Amur, which was described as watering plains of great fertility, and abounding with sables of the rarest sort. As the Spaniards inspired by the thirst of gold explored the wilds of America, so did these adventurous hunters make an incursion into this unknown country, in search of the animals, forty of whose skins are stated by Herberstein to have been a royal gift. These adventurers were few in number, and had immense difficulties to encounter; but their valour and temerity were crowned by complete success. They shortly conquered the whole country in the name of Russia, and received from the timid natives the *yassak*, or tribute of furs. At a distance of seven hundred versts beyond Nertchynsk they constructed the town of Albasyne, which they surrounded with a wall and palisades of wood, and thus rendered it impregnable to the Mandtchus.

Kang-Khi, then Emperor of China, whose grand-

father had conquered that vast empire, indignant that a handful of strangers should imitate his ancestor's example, sent considerable bodies of troops against them; they were, however, constantly defeated by the hardy Cossacks. At length a formidable armament of ten thousand men, with guns and a battering train, were dispatched down the Amur, to lay regular siege to the little town garrisoned by only five hundred men. After a resistance of several months, disease and famine obliged the heroic band to capitulate. Great part of them were sent prisoners to Peking, some of whose descendants still remain there, and have preserved their religion, which served as a pretext to the Russian government to establish a college there, and send a spiritual deputation, who are changed every ten years. It is said, that among the defenders of Albasyne were some of our Scotch countrymen, many of whom at that time, like the present Swiss, sold their services to other nations, and among them to the Czars of Russia, who had for a long time a Scotch body-guard.

The town was razed to the ground, but when the Chinese retired, some of the inhabitants who had escaped, returned, and partially rebuilt it. They were, however, soon obliged to evacuate it by order of the Boyar Golovyne, who had come from Moscow to Nertchynsk in order to treat for peace between the two empires. Had the communications been as direct then as they are now, comparatively speaking, reinforcements might easily have been sent to Albasyne, and that district would probably still belong to Russia. The preliminaries of peace were shortly concluded, but the discussions as to frontier lasted forty years, and

were only terminated in 1728, in the time of Peter II., by the Count Illyric Ssava Wladislavich Ragusinski, who was sent for the purpose by that monarch as being the ablest diplomatist of his day. The Chinese plenipotentiaries, accompanied by the Jesuits from Peking, and backed by a numerous force, presented too imposing an appearance for the Russians to oppose, and they found themselves sorely against their will obliged to abandon the Amur, and the district which surrounded it. Fearful that a useless resistance might put their dominions in the neighbourhood of the Baikal in jeopardy, the Russian ambassador made a merit of necessity, and yielded their claim to that which those who know anything about the matter still consider as the pearl of their conquests beyond the Ural. The day may not be far distant when they will re-possess themselves of it. The soil is fertile, the climate temperate, and the country sheltered from the north by a chain of very high mountains. The lands cultivated by the original inhabitants of Albasyne still produce corn which grows from the seed which falls annually from the ears, as we were told by an officer who saw it in 1832. The river abounds with fish, and potatoes are said to have been grown in the neighbourhood.

No more appropriate spot could be found in Siberia for a penal colony than this. By concentrating all the criminal part of the transported here, the rest of the country would be freed from their presence, which is now often a terrible scourge. The immense advantages offered to them by the fertility of the soil, and mildness of the climate, added to the easy means of water carriage, would tend to civilize these wretches,

and in time render them a useful body of colonists. The vast distance from Russia would make any prospect of escape hopeless, they would even find a new home under better auspices, and would be doubtless joined by the surplus Chinese population who annually abandon their country, and only require a proper direction given to their emigration.

There is no reason to doubt that the chain of the Yablonnoi Mountains which intersect this country, should not be found as productive in minerals and precious metals as the Ural and Altai, as gold sands have occasionally been found there. But the possession of the Amur would be the link wanting to complete the chain of water communication between the Pacific and the Baltic. Russia might then extend her commerce to the Indian Seas, and the advantage accruing from it to the north-eastern parts of Siberia and Kamtschatka would be incalculable.

But we need not anticipate the future. The relative position of Russia and China is wonderfully changed since the beginning of the seventeenth century, and although the former never performed any act of vassalage to the latter, she was treated by her, in the numerous articles agreed to in 1727, as her inferior. We doubt not that the lessons we have taught the Chinese at Chusan and Canton will not be thrown away upon the Russians. We observed, in talking of our Chinese expedition with the authorities in those parts, that they seemed to enjoy the idea of our bringing the Brother of the Sun and Moon to his senses, and it struck us there was an *arrière pensée*. There are people who

believe that England and Russia will one day almost divide the world—*chi sa?* but we at least are getting out of our latitude, and must return to Siberia.

As might well be expected from the great extent of this country, its soil, climate, productions, and natural features, are as diversified as its inhabitants are heterogeneous. It is, properly speaking, divided into only two portions, West and East Siberia, each of which has a separate governor-general.* Western Siberia comprises the whole region from the frontier of the government of Orenburg northward to Tobolsk, and eastward to the farther extremity of the government of Tomsk. Although geographically much smaller than the eastern division, it contains a much larger share of cultivateable land, and a greater number of inhabitants, the relative census being something less than two millions to under a million and a half. It presents in general a perfectly flat surface, except in that part of the Altai which abounds in iron and silver ore, and is more productive perhaps than if under agricultural process. The south-western part is, as we have before said, mostly Steppes; towards the Ural Mountains northward also it is in great part uncultivated, but there is nothing but want of population to prevent its being brought under tillage. Towards Tobolsk there are still large forests of birch and fir, which, however, are gradually diminishing to supply fuel for the mining establishments. As these are cleared away, the soil is cultivated, but the climate, almost the worst in Siberia, is unfavourable to great improvement. There is, however, a large tract in the

neighbourhood of the Irtysch and Lower Tobole rivers, which is productive and fertile. Agriculture in this division ceases at about 60° north latitude.

Of the mineral riches of the Ural we shall speak on our way homeward at Ekaterinburg, to which point it more properly belongs. The western face of the Altai is no less rich in precious metals, copper, lead, silver, and some gold, generally found with it. We shall also go more into detail on this point when we arrive at Barnaoul, the *chef lieu* of the mining department of the Altai. This mountain region, and indeed all the southern frontier, is particularly interesting to the botanist, and the science has been enriched by many new species from this neighbourhood.

In connection with the mountains the rivers must be included, as most of them have their sources at their bases, and are so important a part of the riches of the country, and will probably one day become more so. In the western division one of the principal is the Irtysch, which falls into the Sea of Okhotsk after traversing the eastern parts of Siberia, its source being in the mountains within the Chinese frontier. Balbi, in his valuable geographical work, has fallen into an error on the subject of the Irtysch and the Ob'. He describes the former as being the principal branch of the latter, from the length of its course, its great width, and vast mass of waters, whereas it is in fact its principal confluent. Its course is really longer than that of the Ob', and is properly a foreign, not a Siberian river. But the Ob', whose source is in the Altai, commences there by a rapid river, the Tchulychman, which, winding through a long and narrow valley,

passes through a lake called Téléskoi, and after a visible passage through the lake, from which it rushes with great impetuosity, then takes the name of the Bi. About fifteen versts from the town of Biisk, this river receives into its bosom the river Katun', whose source is near that of the Tchulychman, and after this junction it is called the Ob'. The Irtysch passes by Lake Zaizan in the Chinese territory, and rushes with great velocity through the Steppes as far as Omsk, and *was* there the original boundary of the Russians and Kirghis. From thence receiving the waters of the Om', (a large river anywhere but in Siberia,) it has a course of a thousand versts to Tobolsk, where it seems to fall into the Tobole, but which in reality becomes tributary to it. From hence to Samarof the Irtysch, making many windings, has again a course of a thousand versts, and then falls into the Ob'. At this point it is only a verst and a half in width, whereas the right bank of the Ob' is thirty versts from Samarof. Here the Ob' divides into several branches, each of which is wider than the Irtysch, and before being joined by it, three hundred feet deep, whereas the Irtysch is only fifty.

Between Tomsk and Tobolsk is a vast reservoir of water, known in the language of the country by the name of the Ssor of Laimine, and which signifies a body of water or gulph which has been formed from a lake or river inland. It is situated eighty versts from the small town of Surgut, on the Tobolsk side, and the right bank of the Ob'. At its outlet it is five versts wide, and when a very strong northerly wind blows, breaks its embankments and rushes into the Ob' with

such impetuosity as to impede the navigation for some days. Some Ostiaks and Cossacks of Surgut once attempted to explore this inland sea, but after proceeding more than a hundred versts they described its waves to resemble those of the ocean when violently agitated, and dared not venture further. They saw some islands peopled by savage Ostiaks and Samoyédes unknown to all the world, and though the gulph appeared to abound with fish, they were afraid to attempt to fish lest they should have been attacked by these barbarous people. The inhabitants of Berézof and Obdorsk are acquainted with the Ssor, and state that they have seen it from another gulph of the Ob' five hundred versts long, with which it communicates on the south side, and which the Samoyédes call its inlet. It would seem, therefore, that this vast sheet of water has two separate communications with the Ob' at two distinct places, distant from each other eight hundred versts, in a direct line north and south.

We have already mentioned the Ural as falling into the Caspian Sea after a course of two thousand versts; it is almost the only river in Siberia that does not fall into the Icy Sea. Besides these, there are the rivers Tura, Tobole, and Ritsa in the north, the Om', the Tom, the Ket', and many others in the south-western extremities of West Siberia, all of which might serve as links of communication, as we before stated, between the Pacific and Baltic if the Amur were again a Russian stream. Difficult as this communication would be to establish, it is by no means impossible, and after the lapse of a century or two, if the present Russian Empire should remain entire, may

yet be accomplished. If we consider what America was two centuries ago, we may easily imagine the rivers of Siberia crowded with steam-boats, as hers now are. Population is the principal desideratum, the rest would be quite as easily supplied as in America, though speculation might probably not increase as rapidly, owing to the season when the navigation is open being so short, and the profits therefore proportionally smaller.

It has been asserted that the nature of the government is unfavourable to enterprise; we think the immense developement of manufactories all over Russia in the last few years an answer to that objection. The nobles as a class, though certainly being very far from rich, number among them nevertheless many individuals of colossal fortune, and have much more inclination than those of the same rank, even in our country of shopkeepers, to enter into mercantile speculations. Till within a short time they had, nevertheless, no credit on the *bourse* of Petersburg or Moscow, because their privileges as nobles defended them from incurring the liabilities of merchants. To favour the spirit of commerce the Emperor abrogated these privileges, and made them responsible as traders like other people, and thus an impulse has been given to speculation. Whenever government leaves matters wholly in the hands of individuals, there is no want of inclination to invest capital in anything which may appear to offer a fair chance of success, but it is only on these conditions. We have before observed that private speculation in public matters is not great in Russia; it is, however, solely on this account, that

it is difficult to have the management of any great undertaking entirely independent of some government control. The corruption which pervades all classes of government *employés*, is too notorious not to diminish and damp the zeal for joining in any great work, over which the direction is in the hands of persons whose situations often render them irresponsible. The prime minister of England, in his individual capacity, may be the director of a railway company or a joint stock bank, but he has only his single vote in the business, and possesses no more power than any other co-director. In Russia the uniform and the rank give an authority which is pretty sure to be exerted, and to which an unprivileged person who wishes to invest his capital in any undertaking will not subject himself.

Among the common people in Russia there is a rooted dislike of change. They prefer to go on in the way their fathers and forefathers have trod, and have an inconceivable jealousy of foreigners even in matters where they are professedly ignorant, and where they might learn something to their advantage. We know of repeated instances where manufactories and farm buildings have been burned down by the peasants, from no other imaginable motive than because foreigners were employed in the concern. For a foreigner to establish himself alone in the interior, either for agriculture or manufactures, is absolute madness.

In Siberia, the land communications are excellent, and the rate of carriage exceedingly cheap. But it is slow, and the distances immense. Water communica-

tion is as bad as the other is good, and the vessels and skill of the seamen of as primitive a description as can well be imagined. Enormous flat-bottomed boats, with a single unmanageable sail, towed by horses or dragged by men, are the only means of transport, in which nothing is gained in point of time over the slow-moving *abooz*. Yet the commerce with China alone is very considerable, and all the tea and other articles imported from that country must traverse six thousand versts of Siberia, before they reach Moscow and Petersburg. From Kiakhta to Tumén comparatively little is conveyed by water, rarely above thirty thousand puds weight annually. The vast quantities of lead required for the foundries are certainly conveyed part of the way from Nertchynsk by water, but the difficulties are so great that the tin mines in that neighbourhood have ceased to be worked, because the article can be supplied at a cheaper rate from England. Vessels are sent from Tobolsk, fourteen hundred versts, to the hamlet of Koraikof to fetch salt from the magazines there, which must retrace the same distance to discharge their cargoes for distribution over the empire. Nothing in short is attempted in the way of improvement of the water communication.

In addition to Siberia being intersected in all directions by navigable rivers, so that commerce might flourish in all parts of it, if a proper impulse were given to it, the direct communication, to which we have alluded, between the Pacific and Baltic, is a feasible, however gigantic project. The Amur is navigable from the Pacific to its junction with the rivers Argun' and Chilka. From the Chilka to the Selengá,

there is a constant succession of navigable rivers, with occasional rapids and shallows, in all perhaps thirty versts, which might easily be got rid of at no very heavy expense. A road would require to be made to cross the chain of the Yablonnoi mountains, which at this point are not very elevated. The vicinity abounds with wood fit for building vessels, and iron and cordage are products of the country. The Selengá falls into the Baikal lake, from which the magnificent Angará takes its rise. The only cataracts almost in any Siberian river are found in it between Irkutsk and Yénisséisk, but these, even now, are easily passed. At the town of Yénisséisk a second land journey of ninety versts must be made as far as the town of Makofsk on the Ket', which though a winding river is navigable to the point where it falls into the Ob'. By means of this, the deepest and broadest of all Siberian rivers, and the Irtysch, no impediment would occur as far as Tobolsk, from whence the Tobole, Tura, and Nitsa communicate with the great depôts of salt at Krasnoslobodsk. Here would be the third and last difficulty; a line of communication with the river Tchusovaia to the west of the Ural, two hundred and eighty versts. This river falls into the Kama, and that into the Volga, from which there are now three different communications by water with Petersburg, and consequently the Gulph of Finland and the Baltic. So that there appear to be only four hundred versts between the Pacific and Baltic, where a canal and road is necessary to complete the communication. Greater difficulties were to be overcome in establishing the line of steamers between Vienna and Constantinople, the

same spirit of enterprise might as easily overcome them, and in the latter case also the navigation is only open during a part of the year.

Siberia possesses the products as well as climate of both hemispheres—extremes of heat and cold, days without night, and months when the sun is not above the horizon. All the ordinary grains and vegetables of Europe are found even as far north as the banks of the Irtysch, beyond the 55° of north latitude in West Siberia, and water melons are occasionally grown there; at the southern extremity of East Siberia, in the neighbourhood of the Selengá, they are commonly cultivated. At 70° north latitude, in East Siberia, all vegetation ceases, except the moss which is found in the tundra. Most of our domestic animals are common to this country, and at the northern as well as southern extremities, many of the wild ones of Europe and Asia, with several which are peculiarly Siberian. Fish, in the greatest abundance, and many sorts unknown in Europe, teem in all the rivers, and form the principal food of the inhabitants. The sterlet, sturgeon, common salmon, which is here not much prized, the *omoulé*, a sort of herring, and the *beluga*, a kind of white salmon which grows to an enormous size, may vie with, if they are not superior to, anything that London or Paris can offer to gratify the palate of the epicure.

The severity of the climate is considerably greater the farther you proceed eastward. A variety of concurrent causes may be assigned for the fact, which is indubitable. But whether it is a general law, or ascribable wholly to local and independent circum-

stances, remains to be decided. It is, however, clearly demonstrated, that of all the various causes which combine to affect the temperature, latitude is one of the least powerful, and, as Humboldt has observed, that it is a great error to regard the climate of Europe as the average of the temperature of all the countries which lie under the same parallel of latitude. It is in reality the exception and not the rule.

CHAPTER IV.

Difference of Cold in two Divisions.—Baron Wrangel.—Mr. de Hedenström.—Effects of extreme Cold.—Depth of Frozen Soil.—At Berézof, Obdorsk, Tobolsk, and Yakutsk.—Causes of this.—River Léna.—Mode of Cultivation and Products of Siberia.—Fish.—Burates.—Siberian *Promysle*.—Yukaghires.—Mode of shooting Animals for their Fur.—Catching them in Traps.—People's love of Brandy.—Roguery of Traders.—Tonguses.—Their *Yourtes*.—Mode of Life.—Yakuts.—Animals and Birds.—Geological Phenomena.—Mammoth.—Change of Climate in Siberia.—Other Fossil Remains.—Rivers.

If a considerable number of observations were taken, as has been projected under the joint auspices of our own and the Russian government, the problem may ultimately be solved; but at present no general law has been discovered, by which the temperature, as relative to longitude, appears to be governed. The mountainous nature of the country in East Siberia, which prevents the sea-breezes from exercising their usual genial influence on the general temperature, and the vicinity of immense deserts where no vegetation, inclosures, or trees break the force of the currents of cold air, are insufficient to account for the increased cold, and the latter circumstance is common to West and East Siberia. In West Siberia, the region of extreme cold extends much less far to the south than in the eastern division; and the limit of perpetual ground-ice is also more southerly in the latter than the former; in the one it is limited to Berézof, while in the other it is found at Nertchynsk. The vicinity of

the ocean has generally the effect of preserving a mean temperature in the adjacent countries, and of moderating the extremes of heat and cold. In the most eastern parts of Siberia, this is not the case in either respect. As far as the prevalence of winds is concerned, our friend Mr. de Hedenström has proved, in a long series of meteorological observations, that, in the neighbourhood of Tomsk, where the excess of heat and cold is very great, southerly winds are the most prevalent in winter, and that the cold increases with them more than with northerly ones; while the northerly winds moderate the cold until the end of April, after which time the usual effects are observed, *viz.*, that it is warmer with southerly winds, and colder with northerly ones. We shall give the table of his latest observations in the chapter on Tomsk. North Cape, the most northern point in Europe, has a mean annual temperature of 32°; the vicinity of the river Yana, in East Siberia, in almost the same latitude, only 4° 39′. Irkutsk and London are within half a degree of latitude of each other, and there is a difference of nearly 20° in their mean annual temperature.

Baron Wrangel, in the account of his Polar Expedition, has given various tables that go to prove the same fact, as well as Mr. de Hedenström's observations, to which we attach far greater weight than the Baron's, (who so often quotes him,) from his residence of near thirty years in that country. Mr. de H. is, however, decidedly of opinion, that the cold in Siberia decreases sensibly. In Kamtschatka it rarely exceeds 25° of Réaumur. According to the observations of Dr. Albert,

the greatest cold at Tobolsk in 1830 was 36°; in 1839, in the neighbourhood of Tomsk, it was 33°, and reached 30° only four times that year. At Irkutsk it was once as low as 38°; in the same year, and in the neighbourhood of Tomsk, on the 31st of December, 1840, the spirit thermometer marked – 36°. Ever since 1834 there has been every year a partial thaw there during the season of extreme cold; and we ourselves saw the thermometer at + 2° at Tomsk in the month of November, 1840, after it had been as low as – 35°, and was again constantly after as low as 30°, and, as we have said, once at – 36°. This partial thaw never occurred before 1834. The diminution of the forests in this district is, as yet, too inconsiderable to have any effect on the temperature; but the variations in the barometer are also most extraordinary. Strange as it may seem, this decreasing severity of cold is far from desirable. Sickness increases in proportion, the small-pox especially makes frightful ravages, and its influence on the harvest is everywhere extremely pernicious.

Mr. de Hedenström amused us with his description of the different effects of cold when it reached different degrees. He says that at – 39° the breath is heard to issue from the mouth with a sound like the crackling of very dry hay when crumpled in the hand, and the *traîneau* ceases to glide smoothly over the snow. At – 45°, in spitting, the saliva freezes before it reaches the ground, and you see it form a round, solid ball on the snow. At Holy Cape, in the Icy Sea, in passing through a gorge of the mountains, when the thermometer stood at only – 30°, he felt a current of air

which burned and pricked the skin like a needle. This wind the natives call *kious*, and in order to inure them to it, they expose their faces continually, till the skin becomes hardened, and insensible to its effects. What is very singular, the *kious* is not felt when the wind is high. Mr. de Hedenström threw up a feather in the air when under its influence, and instead of being carried away, it fell perpendicularly to the ground. He considers this phenomenon as a sort of parallel at the utmost distance to the sirocco, and that it is not, properly speaking, a current, but a body of air charged with the *ne plus ultra* of cold, which, having considerably greater density than the ordinary air, communicates itself to it gradually and almost imperceptibly.

Excessive as is the cold in some parts, which, according to Baron Wrangel, is found below – 50, or nearly 120° below zero of Fahrenheit, Mr. de Hedenström assured us that its effects, as described by many navigators in those north-eastern seas, is greatly exaggerated, and their accounts false and ridiculous. The description of what Behrens and Heemskirk suffered in Nova Zembla from the cold, as related in *L'Ami des Enfans*, how by force of cold fire had lost its properties, and other incredible romances, made him exclaim, "Voilà! comment on écrit l'histoire." From our own sensations with the thermometer at – 35°, we are extremely sceptical as to all these tales of wonder. It must be remembered, that with this extreme cold there is no wind, or it would be perfectly intolerable. We have suffered more with 15° and wind, which there is always at Petersburg, than we ever did in Siberia.

At 35°, with proper but not excessive clothing, (if the term can be so applied) and a good constitution, a foreigner like ourselves, who passes his *first* winter in Russia (for they pretend that makes a great difference), feels no inconvenience, when taking good walking exercise. In an open sledge the cold certainly cuts the nose and ears, and especially occasions a feeling of pain over the eyes and forehead, but for a short time, at least, it is not at all unbearable; and when we witness what the lower classes of the natives go through, it is clear that habit makes everything light and comparatively trifling. The higher orders, from rarely or never walking, do not keep the blood in a proper state of circulation, and so must have recourse to artificial means, to guarantee themselves against being frozen, and then, with all their furs and pelisses, in general complain the loudest. Nothing is more common in Petersburg and Moscow, than for a coachman to be on his box from ten o'clock in the morning till three o'clock after midnight, in the most severe weather, without ever getting down, yet you very seldom hear of their being frozen.

During the three winters of 1808, 1809, and 1810, that Mr. de Hedenström passed near the Icy Sea, considerably to the north of Yakutsk, the thermometer never fell below – 46°, though at Yakutsk itself it was much lower, owing to its being surrounded by fine trees, which grow remarkably straight and tall. Dr. Roesleyn, a great *savant* and physician, lived there many years, and it appears from his observations that, in 1809, there were – 51° of cold. The coldest of all places is said to be Omékone, near the source of

the Ynedigyrka, a river which has a course of three thousand five hundred versts. Mr. de Hedenström considers the propinquity of his then residence to the sea, and the prevalence of strong winds, which seem to carry off the mass of congealed air, account for the difference of the temperature of the two places. The density of the air in regions of extreme cold, subjects the natives to scorbutic complaints; and the post-horses are often obliged to stop between the relays, which are frequently of fifty versts length, to have their nostrils cleaned out, the great cold making them bleed violently at the nose.

Baron Humboldt, in his journey through a part of West Siberia, in 1829, applied to Dr. Albert, at whose house he lodged at Tobolsk, and who had resided there many years for the purpose of making observations, for some details as to the state of the ground at Berézof and Obdorsk. He wished to know whether it was generally frozen there at the beginning of September, the end of their summer, or only in wet marshy spots; as well as the exact depth from the surface at which it begins to freeze, the thickness of the frozen stratum, and whether there are any parts which never thaw. The result of the inquiry made of some of the civil *employés* in those two neighbourhoods was, that in *both* places at the end of summer, the earth was frozen at a distance of forty-two inches below the surface, and that this frozen mass was fifty-six inches thick. It is difficult to place much confidence in the accuracy of these statements. It is barely possible that two places, whose north latitude is so different, should present the very same phenomena, more especially as their climate

is also very different, Berézof being in a woody district, and at Obdorsk vegetation almost ceasing altogether. To show the reasonableness of our doubts, we will relate certain facts which appear to offer a contradiction to these statements.

Near the river Birussa, which forms the boundary of the governments of Irkutsk and Yénisséisk, in the 55th parallel of north latitude, certain individuals discovered a few years ago some very rich gold-sands; with these persons, Dr. Lessing, a celebrated *savant* and botanist, associated himself, for the purpose of washing the sands. This gentleman informed Mr. de Hedenström, that the speculation was abandoned, because the frozen state of the undersoil, even in summer, completely prevented the workmen from proceeding to any depth. If this frozen mass were only fifty-six inches thick, they would probably have continued their enterprise, when the obstacle was so easy to overcome. Now, Berézof, which is to the south and west of Obdorsk, is situated at about 64° north latitude, and consequently the Birussa is 9° more to the south. In February, 1840, Mr. de Hedenström made several trials in the neighbourhood of Tomsk, and found the ground frozen only to the depth of thirty-five inches, below it was not frozen, the latitude 56° 50′. At Yakutsk, 62° north latitude, the Russian-American Company bored for water in the court-yard of their establishment to the depth of three hundred and eighty feet. The ground was still frozen, and no water found, so that, supposing all these observations to be correct, at Yakutsk, 2° south of Berézof, the frozen stratum was *at least* eighty times thicker than at

Berézof. Of the truth of the latter statement, there can be no doubt. It is reported in the Annals of the Imperial Academy of Sciences, at Petersburg, in 1837. It is also corroborated by Professor Erman, in 1838, who was himself there, and says that he plunged his thermometer into the hole at the depth of fifty feet, and that it marked $-6°$.

Now, the mean temperature of Yakutsk, by observations made in 1827, is $-5°\ 9'$; and in 1828, the mercury did not thaw for three months together. Consequently, as the mean temperature is $-6°$ nearly, the ground would not be thawed till the increment of heat due to the approach to the centre amounted to 6° of Réaumur, and Erman did not expect to find it thawed so soon as at the depth of four hundred feet, which was the case. From this, he concludes that the strata at Yakutsk have a greater facility of conducting heat than is possessed by ordinary strata in Europe. As Kamtschatka is considerably more eastward than Yakutsk, it would be interesting to know whether that has any effect, and if so, to what depth the ground is frozen there. The proximity of Kamtschatka to the sea, and the fact of volcanic action being still so frequently in operation, would make it a matter of the highest interest to ascertain whether any, and what influence the combination of these two circumstances has on the congelation of the soil. A series of experiments made by the Russians, as far as 190° of east longitude, to which their territority extends, and by ourselves in the neighbourhood of Hudson's Bay, where the magnetic meridian is placed, and in the Rocky Mountains, or even beyond them, might produce im-

portant results, so as to establish some theory as to the congelation of the north, and verify the supposed influence of the magnetic meridian on the cold of those districts. The depth to which the ground is frozen, proves that it must have been very long in the state we now find it, and we confess our leaning to the idea of the congelation having been sudden and not gradual, though, where two such high authorities as Cuvier and Humboldt are not agreed, it would be presumptuous to give a decided opinion. It is very desirable that we had more data on which to form an hypothesis, and clear in some degree the mist in which its origin is enveloped.

At Yakutsk, the inhabitants have cellars in all their houses, made in the frozen ground, precisely as we make ice-houses in this country. In summer, when the heat is as excessive as the cold is in winter, they place all their fresh provisions, such as milk, meat, and fish, in these cellars, where everything becomes frozen in two hours. They likewise construct their graves in this manner, excepting that they make large fires above, and burn the holes in the ground. In these they might easily keep their deceased friends, without going through the process of embalming them, in a perfect state of preservation for any length of time. Should this ever be done, it may afford new subjects of conjecture, after a lapse of thousands of years, perhaps, as interesting then as the Egyptian discoveries now are to us.

In this province, fountains of water are not so common as they are in some parts of Siberia, but they do exist. It would be curious to know whether they

are supplied by springs which force their way through the frozen ground, or by the melting of the snow and the thin crust which thaws on the surface. Baer says the water does penetrate through the perpetual ground-ice. As the river Léna, which passes by the town of Yakutsk, is not so deep as the stratum of soil found to be constantly frozen in its vicinity, it would also be interesting to ascertain whether its bed is frozen, or whether the mass of congealed water above preserves it from the effects of the severe cold on the surrounding ground.

It might naturally be expected that Siberia, which in every part is subject to extreme cold, as compared with that of almost any part of our hemisphere, should be far behind Europe in its vegetable productions. Yet this is very far from being the case. The liberal hand of Nature has compensated the length and severity of the winters by a corresponding rapidity in the progress of maturing vegetation in the short summers. The intensity of the heat and power of the sun is everywhere proportioned to the shortness of its duration; so that the period required for grain to ripen in, after being sowed, is here calculated by days instead of by weeks. The greater number of hours out of every twenty-four that it is above the horizon prevents the ground from getting cold again, as in countries where the summer nights are longer.

That agriculture is not brought to a higher degree of perfection, is attributable to a variety of causes, independent of climate and weather. Want of sufficient population is one of the principal, and the unwillingness of the natives to adopt any improve-

ments, which they consider unnecessary and absurd. They are now beginning, in the neighbourhood of Tumén and Tobolsk, to use manure, but in no other part of Siberia. This is done only on lands which have never lain fallow perhaps a single year since the conquest, or more than two hundred years ago. In most places the process of manuring is wholly unknown; in others it has proved injurious, from causing the grain crops to grow to such a height, that they never have time to ripen. The general calculation is, that they receive in the yield from fifteen to twenty times the quantity sowed.

At Nertchynsk, the extreme south-eastern part of Siberia, the land is so good that it sometimes produces sixty times the quantity sowed. But the corn there grows to such a height, as we have been informed, that a man on horseback may hide himself in it. The consequence is, that if they have white frosts in July, which is not uncommon, the ears do not fill, and the crop fails entirely. Some volunteer colonists from the Ukraine settled, a few years ago, at Dorónysh, on the river Ynegoda, and brought with them their heavy ploughs, to which they harnessed a couple of oxen, as in their own country. In Siberia they use very light ones, drawn by one miserable solitary horse. The natives laughed at the new-comers, who soon perceived that the land was too good, and, instead of manure, put a coat of sand and clay upon it. The natives then began to cry out against the impiety of spoiling good land in this manner; but the result was, that the corn of the Ukrainians did not grow so high as theirs, and thus ripened much sooner, and escaped

the effects of the white frosts. The laugh was then on their side.

Great part of Northern Siberia consists of *tundra*, incapable of producing anything but moss. In the south-eastern districts,—as, for example, from Tomsk to Irkutsk, a distance of fifteen hundred versts, where the land is very much raised above the level of the sea, and the cold great—rye, of which all the bread of the common people is made, wheat, oats, buckwheat, hemp, and tobacco, are grown in great abundance. In the more central regions all our European vegetables succeed as well as on the southern frontier, but fruit-trees are not generally cultivated. A number of wild berries, and fruits peculiar to the country, are commonly found, and supply, in some degree, the want of better sorts. We have, however, seen, in hot-houses, many European exotics growing luxuriantly. The oak is unknown in Siberia, except in the neighbourhood of Nertchynsk, and there a stunted kind only; and we never met with the nut anywhere, although we frequently saw both immediately before passing the frontier. It seems as if Nature had said, at this particular point, "So far shalt thou go, and no farther." They are both common enough, again, on this Mongolese frontier; and cray-fish are found there in the river Ynegoda, but nowhere else east of the Ural mountains. Though this fish is found in quantities in the waters west of the Ural, the inhabitants of Ekaterinburg have tried in vain to make them breed at a distance of only fifteen versts, but on the eastern side of the mountains. From this it has been said, we know not how truly, that they cannot live in any river which falls into the Icy Sea.

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The road from Verkhoyansk to Ust-Yansk crosses a ridge of mountains, called the Verkhoyanskaia, and is a branch of the great Yablonnoi chain. It is very steep, and rises in some parts to the height of three thousand feet above the level of the sea. The country about it is exceedingly *triste*, and almost uninhabited; but the spot is remarkable, as being the limit beyond which the pine and fir do not grow. As the oak and nut are common on the extreme eastern boundary of Russia, before Siberia commences, so the pine and fir, which grow luxuriantly at the southern base of this mountain, cease as suddenly on ascending it. The dwarf-birch is the only tree found to the north of this mountain.

Agriculture has rather retrograded than otherwise in some parts of East Siberia. The Russian government frequently adopts the principle of our anti-protectionists, and while it gives no general encouragement to any branch of utility, does what is still worse, by granting exclusive rights and privileges to individuals, in fact discourage the majority. This is the case in the district of Nertchynsk, where a great deal of land is capable of cultivation, and might become extremely productive. No one sows more than he calculates will be requisite to supply the wants of his family, partly from having no facility of transporting his grain to a distant market, and partly because the administration of the mines have a monopoly, and cultivate lands of their own, instead of buying from the peasants. They keep, however, large flocks of sheep and much cattle. The Burates of one race retain all the nomadic habits of their Mongol ancestors, and despise the sedentary life

of a farmer; but in 1812 the government obliged those who live beyond the Baikal to sow a *dessatine* and a half of land per head every year (about four English acres and a half), and they found their advantage in so doing, yet most of them do little more than the law requires. Previously to this period they did not eat bread, and still, for want of ovens to bake it in, they boil the grain.

Even when employed in agriculture, the peasant of these regions never forgets his rifle; if he is rich enough to possess one, it is seen dangling from his back on all occasions. In every part of Siberia the common people have a passion for the *chasse*, and in many it is the employment of their lives, and their principal means of subsistence. There is no word in any other language but the Russian, which expresses the meaning we intend to convey by the *chasse*. In Russian there are two words which comprise, in different senses, all that can be understood by the term. One is *okhóta*, which signifies exclusively any sort of sporting which is followed, as with us, solely for amusement's sake. The other is *promysle*, which implies that the person who is engaged in it does so for the sake of gaining subsistence by it, and exercises it as a *métier*. The first is consequently applied only to the amateur in the upper classes, while the latter belongs exclusively to the common people, as procuring for them the necessaries of life. Angling for amusement would be called by the former name; herring, whale, pearl, or coral fishing by the latter. The *promysle* is a science which it requires time and practice to acquire. Killing the reindeer as they pass the rivers requires skill and cun-

ning. This is done by means of a tame deer who is trained for the purpose, behind which the *chasseur* is masked, and fires with his rifle or bow and arrow on the herd as they cross.

The Yukaghires, settled on the banks of the river Anuiy, maintain themselves the whole year on the reindeer they kill in spring and autumn. At these seasons the poor animals are driven from the forests by the musquitoes, and take shelter from them in the rivers, and even on the sea-coast, where the does always produce, and return before winter to their homes, having been preceded by the bucks. The natives having discovered where a troop has passed before, conceal themselves in light canoes under the banks, and falling on the herd as they pass, attempt to turn them against the stream. While they are swimming about, being unable to land on either side, an expert matador, as rare here as in Spain, armed with a long pike, kills them one after another, till very often not a single one escapes. The wives and children throw nooses over the horns of the wounded animals, and drag them on shore. Still greater art and patience is required in catching the beasts, the sale of whose skins is the most valuable source of subsistence to the natives.

The bear, the wolf, the black, blue, red, and white foxes, squirrels, sables, marten cats, beavers, &c. &c. are generally caught in traps, in order to injure the fur as little as possible. Each of these animals must be decoyed in a different manner, and by a different bait, and much experience is required to know exactly what suits each particular kind. The squirrel especially

changes its tastes continually, and must be treated with great nicety.

Shooting after our manner is never practised here. If a peasant sees any one shoot flying, he stands with his mouth open, staring with astonishment, not at the skill of the sportsman, but at his folly in expending so much ammunition, which is exceedingly expensive, on a single bird. He believes, as is really the case, that more skill is required to shoot with *his* rifle that carries the smallest quantity of powder, and a single ball about the size of swan-shot, with that extraordinary precision necessary so as not to perforate the fur. In this, perhaps, they excel any people living; if they do shoot, though they prefer to trap even the black cock, *gelinottes*, and *coq de bruyère*, they always strike the bird on the head, and this at a distance of two or three hundred paces. They snare even the *double becasse*, a bird hardly known in England, of which there are periodical flights in Russia and Siberia, and which are in our estimation superior to any sort of game we are acquainted with. When they shoot, they approach the object first on all fours, and then crawl on their stomachs till they are at a proper distance for firing. They have usually two rests to their rifle, which they fix in the snow or ground when not frozen, and having taken a steady aim, rarely, if ever, miss. To an Englishman these rifles do appear, to be sure, the most most extraordinary machines, and few would have the courage to use them. They prove, however, that success depends much more on the skill of the sportsman, than the excellence of his arms, which, indeed, we have long since found out, in many other countries. We

had with us one of Lancaster's tube guns, for which the amateurs would have given more than the prime cost, but more out of curiosity than for use. The common rifle barrels are made at Tobolsk, are very heavy, and have a very small bore. The grooves are round instead of perpendicular, and the ball, which is cut instead of cast, is forced in and the edges rounded off in ramming down. The lock is large and awkward-looking, the springs on the outside, that of the cock clumsy and not tempered; the whole machine works so slowly, that you may see the trigger stop and move on again during the progress of the cock towards the the pan. The charge does not contain fifty grains of powder. In the event of a spring breaking, the *chasseur* readily replaces it by one of wood, generally of larch, which answers his purpose equally well, and he is thus independent of the gunmaker. With all these imperfections, as we have said before, they rarely or never miss, and always hit an animal, whose fur is precious, through the muzzle. Rifles of this sort cost here twenty-five roubles, powder five roubles a pound, and lead is also dear.

Those who shoot their game (they are the minority) go into the woods in winter, alone, with a stock of provisions, consisting of flour merely, and a pot to boil it in, which they eat with the flesh of any animal they happen to kill, for almost all are eaten indiscriminately. A sort of skate, turned up in front, made of a thin strip of birch wood, about eight inches wide, and from two to three feet long, the under part of which is covered with the skin of an animal with the hair on, and the better sort with the skin of the reindeer's

feet, is placed under the foot, and fastened with a strap over the instep. The hair below prevents the man from slipping too fast over the snow. His dog and gun complete the list of the *chasseur's* necessaries. As soon as the dog winds an animal, or is put by his master on the track, he goes away, giving tongue, till he comes up with the animal, who takes refuge in a tree. Here he stops and begins to bark to let his master know where the game is, who fixes his rifle and shoots it. These people have an extraordinary sagacity in knowing at once the track of any animal, and distinguishing between old and fresh ones, by touching the snow and judging from its hardness how long the track has been made.

The *promysle* consisting in setting traps and pitfalls is differently managed. In the month of October the snow has set in in many parts, and fur is in perfection: at this season the fox and squirrel have their long coats, and the sable its black points which make it more valuable. The bear requires a fortnight from the time it leaves its earth, to bring its skin to perfection. To this *chasse* they go in considerable numbers together, often a long distance from home, every one with his sledge containing his baggage and provisions, to which is attached a sort of pulley, and to which they harness themselves, and draw their own sledge. Their families often accompany them; at starting they choose an ancient, who becomes the judge and arbiter of any differences that may arise among them. They have also the wooden skates, described above, on which they get rapidly over the ground, and often do not halt less than three hundred versts from home.

The first business is to build a hut, or to search for the one of the year before. The party is then dispersed in every direction to set their traps and form their pit-falls, which they go to inspect every morning very early, bait them afresh, and take away what is in them. The Russians skin the animal at once, and throw away the body; the natives take it all to the hut, and consume the flesh with the exception of that of foxes, wolves, and sables. The Russians will condescend to eat bears and squirrels, the former of which we can vouch for being excellent. At Christmas the party breaks up and goes home to enjoy the festivities of the season, and frequent the fairs which are held about that time. The industrious return again and stay till spring—but these are very rare. On his return home the poor *chasseur* finds his creditors waiting for him, pays his debts if he has been successful, and lays out the surplus in brandy. When the brandy is all gone, he lets himself out to assist the fishermen, with no wages but his food.

Winter comes round again and brings the same train of life with it; if overtaken by illness or old age they perish miserably. This custom of spending their little all in brandy deprives them of the means of fitting themselves out for the *chasse*, and they must have recourse to credit. The petty merchants in the towns, Cossacks and priests, keep these wretched people in their debt for life. In October they provide them with the necessaries for their expedition, and drive them as it were to it, being obliged to accompany them halfway for fear they should return, and barter their outfit away for brandy. The contract

between them is simple enough. The *chasseur* is provided with everything on condition of giving up the whole of his booty to the purveyor on his return. A price is put on the different skins, always in favour of the creditor, who repays himself, and gives the remainder of the produce to the *chasseur*. If the expedition turns out badly, the poor man's debt cannot be discharged, and then interest accumulates on interest, till he has never a prospect of being out of debt as long as he lives. The consequence is, that every stratagem is adopted to defraud the creditor, not from sheer dishonesty, but in order to have wherewithal to satisfy the passion for brandy, without which they cannot live. In other respects these poor people are honest, hard-working, intrepid creatures, and after all, with us, when his ship is paid off, Jack is never happy till his money is drunk out, and then he goes to sea again. It is not so much to be wondered at in the far East of Siberia.

At no great distance from the Icy Sea there is a colony of Russians settled there since the first invasion of the country, principally on the river Ynedigyrka, who have adopted the mode of life of the Yakuts and Yukaghires, by whom they are surrounded. They live by fishing, and catching the different sorts of foxes with which those regions abound. The rascalities to which they are exposed from the little merchants with whom they have dealings, are of the same description as those we have just related; but in the instance we are going to quote, only equalled by the transactions of Jew money-lenders in London. Some years ago a person of the better sort applied to a tradesman of

Yakutsk to make him a carved frame for an image of St. Nicholas, which he had inherited, and which was to be silver gilt. The price was fixed at seventy roubles. The following year the frame made its appearance, and the happy proprietor paid the man fifty-six skins of white foxes, representing as many roubles, and remained still in his debt fourteen roubles. At the end of seven years, during which time the poor owner of the saint had paid his creditor ninety skins or roubles for principal and interest (the original debt being fourteen) the tradesman took forcible possession of the image, for which he extorted a bill for twelve hundred roubles. This sort of usury is common in these distant regions, and the calculation was made in the following manner. The trader received a fox's skin for a rouble, and sold it for two and a-half, consequently the original debt of fourteen foxes' skins was worth to him thirty-five roubles. Had he laid this money out at Yakutsk, he could have made a profit of a hundred and fifty per cent. on the Ynedigyrka by the transaction, and so on the following year, and *ad infinitum*. According to this calculation he cheated himself by only demanding twelve hundred roubles; but unfortunately the affair did not go to a court of justice, as the usurer was liable to the extreme punishment of the law, had it been investigated. Besides this, there is a strict prohibition for any one to give credit to the common people for more than five roubles. Whoever breaks through this salutary law, has no remedy against his debtor beyond that sum, but as usual the law is disregarded.

Strangely enough, the farmers who have the right

of distilling and selling brandy in these districts are not allowed to sell it to the natives; only the Russians may be poisoned legitimately. But if the *chasseur* could not get his stock of brandy, he could not go to the *chasse*, and all commerce would cease, as it depends principally on the furs, and the misery of the people would be aggravated tenfold. The poor man cannot buy it openly at the gin-shop, and is often obliged to pay five times the price established by law to procure it clandestinely, so that the law only helps to ruin him the faster, and never prevents his drinking. The farmer who contracts with government for the monopoly pays a heavy sum for the privilege, which he could not do if he was not sure that the severity of the law would enable him to sell his brandy at this enormous rate, so that the government gains eventually in revenue, but the law is doubly broken by the spirits being sold at all to the *chasseur*, and greatly too above the legal price, and the poor people are ruined. In this way, as is too often the case, the Russian laws become a mockery and a curse.

Of all the Nomadic tribes in this part of East Siberia, the Tonguses are the most uncivilized and improvident. Descended originally from the Mandtchus, they have lost all resemblance with those of the present day. Excepting those who live in the vicinity of Nertchynsk, the Tonguses keep neither horses, cattle, nor dogs. They subsist solely by trapping animals for their fur, and in the long day-less winter are in great misery, and reduced to beg from their Russian neighbours. Their *yourtes* or huts are pretty much of the same description as those of the Kirghis.

The skeleton is composed of a few poles stuck in the ground or snow, bent inwards towards each other in the form of a cone, and fastened together at the top. They are covered with skins of reindeer, prepared and sewed together for the purpose, and the yourte is complete. A small gap is left somewhere or other between the poles to enable them to lift up the skins in this part, and this serves for a door. A large fire is made in the centre, and the smoke finds an exit in every direction. Their cooking utensils are hung across sticks upon the fire, and in winter are filled with snow for water. Reindeer and bear skins form both bedding and clothing; they generally have a kind of sack made of them, which reaches half way up the body, and in this they ensconce themselves before going to sleep. When not in actual use, everything is buried in the snow, in order to preserve the hair, which from want of proper tanning would otherwise soon fall off. The yourtes of the richer Tonguses, an ancient for example, instead of common poles, have a trellis work, and a door which shuts and opens properly, the inside lined with leather, and many of them have their coffers and furniture, and some articles of silver; there is no getting rid of the inconvenience of the smoke, however, and a roasting fire on one side, and cold air on the other. They possess a stock of tame reindeer which supply them with food in winter, but the poor will not kill them, except in a case of great emergency.

It is rare for them to encamp more than one day on the same spot, but merely from love of locomotion. They have no thought for the morrow in any way.

When their provisions are consumed, the man goes to the *chasse*, pointing with his finger towards the direction he means to take, and making other dumb signs by which his wife may know the spot where she will find him. As soon as he has set off, she takes up the *yourte*, puts all their property on the reindeers' backs, and proceeds to the place her husband pointed out, which she never fails to discover. The tent is then pitched, and everything prepared for the return of the husband. If he has been lucky, he brings home a piece of flesh for supper, and the dumb motions are again employed, to show his wife where the remainder is deposited, which it is her business to fetch next day. As long as the provisions last, he never does anything but eat, smoke, and sleep; should he kill nothing, he comes home without saying a word, sits down by the fire, lights his pipe, and then tightening his girdle, goes to sleep. The wife and family do the same, and all go supperless to bed: fastening the belt tight round the stomach is supposed to prevent them feeling hunger. A Tonguse gives the first animal he kills in the day, be it however valuable, to the first person he meets, because he attributes his success to this person's luck.

The Yukaghires who have any Russian neighbours, during the two months of the darkness of the Polar night, pay them visits to obtain some sustenance, or to exchange if possible their skins for tobacco. They smoke the strong tobacco of the Ukraine, which they mix with sawdust to make it go further. The smoke is never suffered to escape from the mouth, but swallowed, and produces some of the *delicious* effects which the opium-eater enjoys. The whole family, men,

women, and children, begin to smoke as soon as they can walk; the first and only care is the requisite provision of tobacco, and if they have any money left, it is spent in brandy. But they are not solitary drunkards at least; every body, even the children in arms, share the nectar with them. Both these tribes are singularly honest, simple-minded, and good-tempered, but if they imagine an injustice is done them, the consequences are often fatal to the Cossacks and commissaries of the district. Mr. de Hedenström told us an anecdote of these savages which would do honour to any civilized people.

The Yukaghires on the Anuiy are on terms of intimacy with the Russians of Nijni-Kolynsk. When their stock of rein, *i. e.* flesh of reindeer, is laid in, the Russians go and pay them a visit for a week or more, during which time they and their dogs are fed gratuitously. When they go away, the Russian begs of his host some provision for the journey. The answer is, "Help yourself," and the Russian friend has no false modesty about so doing, but fills his sledge so that the dogs can hardly drag it along. In his turn the Yukaghire goes into the town, and is hospitably treated the first day by his former guest, but after this, he must pay for the food of himself and his dogs. Mr. de Hedenström asked one of them one day, why he did not treat the Russians, when they came to pay him a visit, in the same manner. His answer was, after a moment's reflection, *Komou stydnéy*, or, On whose side is the shame? a reply we fear few Christians would have been prepared with.

We have said before, that in this part of East Siberia, vegetation ceases at the 70th degree of north

latitude. All is tundra and moss beyond this; but the lakes are larger and more numerous, and the marshes stretch far and wide. There is one of these lakes called by the Yakuts *tastakh*, which signifies full of stones, remarkable for a quantity of bituminous wood which it throws up. In it are found pieces of petrified rosin, quite clear like amber, and sometimes containing insects incrusted in them. It seems, however, to be lighter than amber, (we have some specimens of it,) and when burned, has not the agreeable smell. Great quantities of wild-fowl have their haunts here, among them two sorts of wild-geese not common in other places: one, smaller than the grey wild goose (*férus*) is quite white, except the tips of the pinions, which are black, and the foot and tibia red. The other is quite black, and called in Russian *némok*, because it utters no cry in flying: it is the size of a large wild-duck, but in form more round. Two sorts of swans only are found here, one large and one small. The large one always builds in the woods *off* the tundra; the little one always *on* the tundra, where there is no wood. There is a curious little snipe (*Tringa lobata* of Linnæus,) the size of a sparrow, and web-footed, so as to be able to swim. It is also found in the Barabinski Steppes. The brigand gull (*Larus parasiticus*) frequents these parts, but no others in Siberia. The white partridge (*Tetrao lagopus*) and white owls, are the only birds (not water-fowl) that winter here. The great elk (moosdeer of Pennant) pastures on the borders of the tundra, but never leaves the woods. They are very large, one of a year old being the size of a horse. The argali (*Capra Ammon*) are found on the east of the

Kolymá, as well as on the southern frontier, and mountains within the Chinese territory.

Although the northern and eastern parts of Siberia are not as productive of minerals, as the mountainous districts more south and west, there are many phenomena, as well as objects of value, found even here below the surface of the ground. The steep banks of the rivers and lakes in the vicinity of the sea are often composed of alternate strata of earth and ice. The strata of ice are horizontal like those of earth, and are below them, though some vertical veins are found intersecting the earthy strata, which are probably of recent date, and formed by fissures through which the water and snow have penetrated. But it seems extraordinary how these layers, placed in perfectly regular order over each other, should have been formed, and this too not once, but over and over again to an unknown depth. In New Siberia, a little island, of twenty-five versts in breadth, is very remarkable from a mountain it possesses on its south-eastern coast, about two hundred feet high, and quite perpendicular. It is composed of alternate horizontal layers of a greyish free-stone, and shining bituminous wood. The lower extremity is free-stone. On ascending it, pieces of coal are found here and there, resembling willow charcoal, and speckled over like flakes of ashes, so much so as to have the appearance of being still warm. It is, however, so hard, as to be difficult to cut with a knife. At the top of the mountain, this bituminous wood, which at the bottom is found in horizontal layers, is placed perpendicularly, and stands out above the upper soil, which is the same free-stone as before,

like piles which have been regularly driven. In the banks of the lakes on the tundra, between the Yana and Yynedigyrka are found entire birch-trees, incrusted in the soil, roots, bark, and branches all together. The natives call them "wood of Adam," to signify their antiquity; and use them for fuel. They make no flame, and give a good heat. No birch-trees of this size are now found growing nearer than three degrees of latitude south of the spots where these are deposited. How were they then brought here? or were they once indigenous here, and was the Arctic circle once much warmer than it now is? If so, when and why did the change occur?

But the principal subterranean riches of these regions consist in the fossil remains of an animal, which we think should be placed in the class of the unknown. The name of mammoth has been given to it by the Tatars, which is taken from the word *mama*, signifying in the Thibetan language *earth*, from whence also, probably, our "mamma," or "mother earth," is derived. The old Chinese archives, Burates and Tonguses speak of it as an animal still existing, but that lives concealed in holes in the ground, and dies when it sees the sun. From this supposed peculiarity, the name of mammoth was given to it. The Chinese account is, that it is of the nature of the mouse, though as large as an ox or elephant. The Tonguses hold it to be a beast of evil omen, and pretend it has been seen alive on the isthmus of Tamut, and that all the family of those who saw it, died. At last the prejudice began to wear off, because the chief who found the skeleton now at Petersburg, though he fell

ill after it, ultimately recovered. It is called by naturalists *Elephas primogenius*. Whatever it may be, it would appear that Siberia is the country where its remains are found in the greatest quantities. They are frequently dug up in all the north-eastern coast, but diminish in size the farther north, while they increase also considerably in number. In New Siberia, (which he himself discovered, and with the late Emperor's sanction gave its name to,) Mr. de Hedenström found once ten tusks within the space of a verst from each other. These remains are there called horns, though they, in fact, proceeded from the jaw, and are therefore properly tusks, though of a somewhat different form from those of the living elephant. The ivory of which they are made is very valuable: we have seen hundreds of them; in shape they are always circular, bending inwards, so as to form three quarters of a circle. The size and weight varies; near the mouth of the Léna they have been found weighing twelve pud, or 432 pounds English, while in the islands of the Icy Sea they rarely exceed three pud.

In this region, as we have remarked, alternate strata of earth and ice are found to an unknown depth, and the soil itself is always frozen. On the banks of the rivers in these localities, the fossil remains are generally deposited. Vast fissures created by the snow and water, which penetrate the upper crust, cause large masses of earth and ice to become detached, when these monstrous remains burst forth again from their hiding-place, after a lapse of years which no one pretends to count. By this means the most perfect specimen that has ever been found, came to light,

which is now in the Museum at Petersburg, in a small room alone with an elephant, which is comparatively a dwarf by its side. Whether it was so placed to prove that it is not an elephant,

Qualia nunc—producit corpora tellus,

we know not; but for the contrast it cannot be better situated. It was found on the eastern bank of the Léna, in a mass of earth and ice, which had disconnected itself; and lay for some years before any notice was taken of it. The head was first seen, and the ivory became the prey of the lucky individual who discovered it in 1799, and who did not trouble himself to disentomb the body. It so happened that a Mr. Adams, an Englishman attached to the Imperial Academy of Science at Petersburg, who accompanied Count Golofkyn in his embassy to China in the early part of 1805, took the opportunity of making a tour in this district in order to prosecute his scientific researches. He heard at Yakutsk of this discovery having been made by an ancient of the Tonguses, who had sold the ivory to an agent of a merchant of the name of Papof, and who sent the tusks, with the drawing of the animal, to his employer, at whose house Mr. Adams saw it. He lost no time in getting to the spot, where he found the skeleton almost entire, together with part of the under side of the flesh, which was so fresh that the bears and dogs had already devoured a great portion of it. By dint of considerable labour he removed the remainder of the flesh, and cleared the carcase; the under part being still embedded in ice and earth, was saved from the beasts of prey. One of the fore-legs was broken off, but

found afterwards; eight vertebræ of the dorsal spine, only, out of about thirty, were perfect; one scapula, the other was found afterwards; the basin, and three other extremities, still held together by the ligaments, and about half the skin remained. The head was covered with a dry pellicule, and one ear, which was pointed, and therefore different from those either of the existing elephant or sea-horse, was well preserved, with some tufts of hairs on it. Adams thought the pupil of the eye distinguishable; but it is doubtful whether it is more than a dry film which is visible. No trunk or tail were found; but some naturalists imagine that the places for the insertion of the muscles of the proboscis are discernible on the skull. The point of the lower lip was unfortunately clipped off by Mr. Adams, and the upper one had been completely destroyed, so as to lay bare the grinders, which are not carnivorous.

A long anatomical description is given by Tilesius, in the fifth volume of the Annals of the Academy of Sciences of Petersburg, to which we refer any one who wishes a more complete account of it. Cuvier has also given some description of it, and does not agree in all Tilesius advances on the subject, though he wrote with the animal before him, and Cuvier never saw anything but a very inaccurate drawing of it. Tilesius says, the jaws are of an irregular formation, and the grinders complex, or composed of several lamellous grinders, adhering together, as in no other animal; that they are distinguished by their enamel, and divided into perpendicular septa. The foot resembles, in some respects, that of the elephant, but the sole is

larger and more rounded, as if by the weight of the body it had to support: the interstices between the hoofs and toes, of which there are five, are also similar in the two animals. These, though distinct in the skeleton, were united into one mass by a horny membrane when the animal was alive, but in such a manner that the points of the toes were barely visible in the hoofs, shortened off to the edge of the foot. The skull is without bony orbits, and distinguished by a nasal cavity or vault in the forehead, furnished with little cells, and extended forward with tubulous sockets to the anterior part of the tusks.

Mr. Adams does not appear to have made an anatomical comparison of it and the common elephant, as far as the skull, vertebræ, and feet, are concerned. Some naturalists doubt its ever having had a tail, and whether the os coccygis exists; but it is not probable so necessary an appendage should have been wanting. It might have been small, like that of the rhinoceros, as well as that of the mastodon, especially if, as we believe, the animal frequented water-courses and marshy ground. The height of the skeleton, before it was cased up again in the stuffing and skin, was nine feet four inches; the length, sixteen feet four inches; the length of the tusks, nine feet six inches along the curve, and only three feet seven inches from the root to the point, owing to their remarkable curvature: the two weighed three hundred and sixty pounds, and with the head four hundred and fourteen pounds. There were very few brains in the skull, and they were quite dried up. The horns are much harder than common ivory to turn, and of a different colour: we have seen

some weighing near seven puds each, and twenty feet long. A good deal of the hair remained on the animal when found: it is the colour of the camel's; and there are three distinct coatings, the undermost about an inch and a half long, thick and curly; then a sort of bristle, from three to four inches long, of a dark reddish colour; and then some strong bristles, from twelve to eighteen inches long, thicker than horse-hair. Besides this, it had a long mane. The skin is half an inch thick, of a dark grey colour, not unlike the common elephant's: it appears to be bullet-proof. About a pud of loose hair was found detached from it; and some idea may be formed of the weight of the skin, when we state that it required ten men to carry it about a mile to Mr. Adams's lodgings. The vertebræ of the back were longer than those of the elephant, and the neck short. The Tonguse who first found it entire said that it looked as if it had been very well fed, as it had a paunch down to its knees, another reason for supposing it inhabited wet and marshy places. Mr. Adams purchased what he supposed to be the tusks; but, as they had been removed so long before, it may be doubtful whether they were the identical ones that belonged to it. The whole was sent to Petersburg, and is very well preserved in the Museum there. Mr. de Hedenström collected a great number of similar tusks and bones at Ust-Yansk, but, having no means of carrying away such bulky articles, he broke them up, and took out the marrow, which he put into sacks. It melted, however, in one night, in a hot room, without any unpleasant odour.

Let us examine on what grounds the animal is

called an elephant. We are aware that this alludes to the *genus*, and not the *species*, and that many of the fossil remains of rhinoceroses, elephants, *et id genus omne*, are of a different species to those now existing. Indeed, no fossil remains of any extinct animals are completely identical with living specimens. The elephant, at the present day, is a native of tropical climates; but it is probable that he can live permanently under a moderate temperature. Siberia, then, must once have enjoyed at least a moderate climate, if the thousands of the mammoths, supposing them of the elephant genus, which are so frequently deposited there, lived and died where they are found. Did, then, the revolution caused by the Deluge, or some subsequent sudden agency, change the seasons so entirely, that the arctic circle, which had previously been what the torrid or temperate zone now is, on the retiring of the waters, became suddenly the region of extreme cold, as we find it in our days? Cuvier was decidedly of opinion, that the strata where these remains are found were instantaneously frozen. Humboldt does not think this necessary. No one, at all events, doubts that they have remained pretty much in the same condition as we now find them, ever since the animals were deposited there, and that the temperature has undergone no change since that period. That they should have been washed with the alluvial matter from a considerable distance to the southward, by one of the great floods to which the rivers in Siberia are subject, is very probable. That, from the rivers being still frozen near their mouth, while in their upper course there was running water, and that they

were stopped by the ice, and deposited there, is also very probable. But we see no reason to suppose that the southern parts of Siberia, from whence only the waters could have brought them, were ever of a sufficiently high temperature to enable the mammoth to have existed in them, always supposing him to have been of the elephant genus. That they are occasionally found in other places may possibly be the effect of some accident, which has conveyed them from any distance, however great; but the immense and unknown quantities still deposited in Siberia would lead us to conclude that their general residence was there.

Frequent deposits of the bones of the *Elephas primigenius* are found in the British isles, and especially on the south-eastern coast, at the bottom of the sea, in the valleys between what have been mountain ranges at some period of time. It is no uncommon occurrence for fishermen in these parts, when dragging for cod or turbot, literally to catch elephants; and there is every reason to imagine the animals to which the bones belonged, perished in the spots where they are found. Whatever was the cause of this race becoming extinct, and there is no reason for seeking for any extraordinary agency to effect it, or to suppose that they became extinct all at once, it is highly probable that it occurred antecedently to the creation of man. It is also highly probable that our island then formed part of the great European continent, and that one of the great changes in the distribution of land and water, which are still going on, severed us from it. It is singular, that while so many bones of this animal are

found in Great Britain, very few of the *défenses* have been discovered, while in Siberia they are in such abundance. This may be owing to the frozen state of the ground there, which has preserved them from decay and decomposition.

Of the occasional migration of animals there can be no dispute; and we even think it possible that the mammoth bones found in other parts of Siberia itself, but in small numbers, may be those of some of them who have wandered out of their native country and perished. Wilkinson says, that in Egypt, many animals and plants which were formerly common in the northern parts, have ceased to exist there, of which the crocodile is one, and the hippopotamus is no longer found in Lower Æthiopia. A few years ago one wandered into Nubia, below the second cataract, and another even to Damietta, where the people were as much astonished at seeing him, as he was at finding himself there.

We have alluded, in the course of these pages, to other animals similarly found out of their latitudes, but all these are individual cases, and cannot apply to the mammoth in the north of Siberia, though it may account for his remains being found in other places. The Petersburg specimen was found on the banks of the Léna, in a casement of ice, covered with a layer of moss and friable earth, fourteen inches thick, forty-two feet below the surface of the ice; and it is only there, and on the coasts of the Icy Sea, and to the north-east, that they are found in immense numbers. It is only of late years that it has been doubted they were brought from the south, and the only arguments used

about it were, as to how they got there. One hypothesis was, that the action of the retiring waters of the Flood brought them from tropical latitudes, and deposited them in Siberia. This is an absurdity on the face of it. None we believe have ever been found near the equator, certainly not south of it, and why should the whole race at the time when it became extinct, have been conveyed in one direction, and comparatively almost to the same spot? Moreover, although the animal might have been preserved any length of time in the frozen crust, where it is now discovered, we suspect that in its journey up from a warmer climate, the progress of decomposition would have been rapid enough, and the bones and tusks have sunk to the bottom. According to the theory of rotation, the moving force tends towards the centre, and consequently objects should have been carried from the poles towards the equator, rather than *vice versâ*. The winds, therefore, must have been very strong, and constantly from the south, to have borne the animals against the current in a northern direction. But such an hypothesis is too absurd to require an answer.

The mammoth in the Museum at Petersburg, may fairly be considered a small specimen, as there are tusks often found, weighing double what these do. They are of a different form to those of the common elephant, the hair of quite another sort, and the elephant has no mane as this had. These, some particularities in the structure of the jaws and feet, and the want of a proboscis, form striking points of dissimilitude between them.

We do not mean to assert positively that it never

possessed a trunk, but it may be allowed to doubt where there is no absolute proof. Oken, the great German naturalist, says, "it differed more from the common elephant than the ass from the horse. That it had no proboscis, (though the lips were bitten off,) would give it an affinity to the sea-horse; that it had a mane, and was protected by its hair against the effects of cold, and had pointed ears, makes it agree neither with the elephant nor sea-horse. What are we to say to all this?"

The hair and mane would seem to belong to an animal inhabiting cold places, perhaps waters and water-courses, as we have suggested. If it was purely an herbivorous animal, it could not have found subsistence in the regions where it is now deposited, for nothing but moss grows there, nor would it have done so in the south of Siberia, as it now is. But although its anatomical structure were ever so similar to that of the elephant, its habits, food, and residence, may have been very different to those of the living animal. There would then be no difficulty in supposing him an inhabitant of the country where his remains are found in the greatest numbers, and the thickness of his skin, covered as it is with three coats of warm clothing, would favour the idea of nature having thus guaranteed him against the effects of cold. But if he lived principally in the water, what became of him in winter, when all the rivers and water-courses were frozen up? Did he then retire to the caves where the Chinese consider his abode was?

Is it going too far to suppose it possible, under the presumption that this part of Siberia is now much

colder than it once was, that, at the time when the animal existed in great numbers here, the rivers were not frozen to the extent they now are, and that, when this great increase of cold took place, which caused the rivers to be frozen up half the year, (and if the change was sudden, so much the better for our argument), that the mammoth was thus driven out of his usual abode and perished? Peter the Great, who Coxe justly observed, was a great monarch without being a great naturalist, supposed the fossil elephant remains to be those of the animals who perished in the wars of Alexander the Great, who is said to have crossed the Don. Some few have been found south of Moscow, near Woronesch. The different opinions of many eminent naturalists upon the subject, leave it so far unsettled, that a theory more or less, where all *may* be wrong, is perhaps allowable. Although the arguments now are on the whole strongly in favour of their having been formerly indigenous in Siberia, Pallas, a great authority, when he had seen the remains actually disinterred, retracted this opinion, which he had previously adopted. He then supposed them to have been brought to the spots where they now lie, by some great flood of water, especially as they are often found surrounded by various marine productions*. But although it is clear

* Les rivières qui descendent de la pente orientale des Monts Ural montrent souvent des os mêlés de produits marins. Pallas les a vus près de l'Isete avec des glossopétres, des pyrites, et sous differentes couches d'argile, de sables, d'ocre, &c. et à Verkoturie près de la Tura où Steller en avoit déja trouvé encore avec des glossopètres et des bélemnites. Il en a aussi detaché le long de l'Irtisch dans un sable pur mêlé de coquillèe. Ils se trouvent pêlemele souvent avec des débris d'animaux marins, tels que coquillages ou autres, dont une partie se sont aussi attachèes dessus. Le temoignage positif de

that water has passed over them for an indefinitely long period, they offer no marks of having been carried along by it, which must have been visible on the extremities at least. If, according to Cuvier's idea, they were suddenly frozen up, this could not be; but the skeleton at Petersburg is sufficient to disprove it.

On the western coast of the isle of Laikhof, the remains are most numerous, so as to form as it were the ground-work of the island; and although there have been constant removals of them during eighty summers, there is no apparent diminution in the number. After a long continuance of easterly winds, the bank in which they are embedded becomes exposed, and a large supply is cast up, seemingly from the bed of the sea. The great skeleton was found sixty paces from the coast, and one hundred from the ice-berg from which it fell, and which was from a hundred to a hundred and fifty feet high. But this was a casual thing, and not a general deposit. A long lapse of years has doubtless been required to make these accumulations; and if, as Cuvier thinks, the era of carnivorous animals is later than that of the mammoth tribe, the period of the existence of the latter may be removed to an unlimited distance, and the ordinary course of

Pallas, celui de Fortis et de beaucoup d'autres ne permet pas de douter que cette dernière circonstance n'ait souvent lieu, quoiqu'elle ne s'observe pas toujours. Les coquilles, les millépores, et les productions marines, qui se sont fixées sur quelques uns de ces os, prouvent d'ailleurs qu'ils sont restés au fond du liquide. Ce qui est bien rémarquable encore, c'est qu'on les trouvent souvent dans ou sous des couches remplies de corps marins comme coquilles, glossopétres, et autres.—CUVIER, *Hist. Natur.*

nature, the general agent in all matters of this kind, is amply sufficient to account for the apparent phenomena.

These regions of Siberia have preserved some other animals, as little known as the one we have described. The heads only have been discovered; one of them is a little longer than that of a reindeer, the teeth herbivorous, and the antlers large and branching. The skull is covered with a coat of horn, which has a sort of furrow hollowed out of the surface of the skull, down the centre. The two divisions in the horn, thus formed, taper down to a point in the direction of where the neck appears to have been set on. The interior of this horny coating is yellow, with veins of a yellowish brown, and when sawn has all the appearance of a knot of birch-wood. One of these is also in the Museum at Petersburg, and was presented at Mr. de Hedenström's suggestion to the late Emperor, by a merchant of Ust-Yansk, who received for it a gold medal, attached to the riband of St. Anne. The other head is $31\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, $12\frac{1}{4}$ broad. The forehead high, but flat, the muzzle turned downwards and indented with regular seams of bony raised points, not very different to the thorn-like points on the protuberance of the Missouri leviathan. With this is found a thing which looks more like the talon of a large bird, than the horns of an animal. The longest we have seen is 35 inches. The surface is flat, and pointed underneath in the shape of a triangle. The substance has the smell of horn, but can be split down in perpendicular strips. The Yukaghires make use of them to give elasticity to their bows. They inlay a strip all along the bow in the

same way the other tribes do the horn of oxen, or a piece of whalebone. But their bows carry much farther than the others. They believe it to have been a bird of miraculous size, and the Yakuts pretend to have found a quill of it large enough to make a quiver for their arrows.

An immense fossil crane, fifteen feet high, is said to have been found also in North America. Dr. Kyber, who accompanied Baron Wrangel as a naturalist in his voyage of discovery, considers this to be the head of a rhinoceros, and that accidental circumstances had changed the shape of the horns. But the difference between the length and breadth of this head does not tally with that of the rhinoceros. The tusks of that animal, too, are conical, not flat and triangular, nor knotty, or of a yellowish green colour inside.

The rivers which belong entirely to East Siberia, and do not touch the western division at all, are very numerous, and form not only a remarkable feature in that country, but from their great length and breadth, and the area they cover, stand in the first, if not the very first rank, among all the rivers of the globe. We have already mentioned the Ob' in our notice of the rivers of West Siberia, its source being in the Altai mountains, whence it takes a north-eastern direction, and at last falls into the Icy Sea, not far from Nova Zembla. It has been improperly called the largest river of the old continent, whereas the Léna has a much longer course than it, and much longer in reality than geographers generally ascribe to it.

The Léna rises in the mountains which border on the lake Baikal, and takes almost immediately a northern direction, and after receiving a great number of tributary streams falls by five branches into the Icy Sea. From its course being very sinuous, it is much longer than is apparent in calculating it by degrees of latitude: its length is 5000 versts, or about 3300 miles, and its breadth, for some distance near Yakutsk, seven versts. In the last work of Davis on China it is stated that the river Kéang is the third river in the world in point of size, coming after the Mississippi and Amazon, that it is upwards of three miles wide, and 2400 long, or fifteen times greater than the Thames. According to Humboldt's calculation the course of the Amazon is precisely that of the Léna, 3300 miles. The Mississippi has certainly no rival in the length of its course, which from its rise in the 49th parallel of latitude, to its fall into the Gulf of Mexico in the 29th, embraces a distance of nearly 5000 miles. It bears, however, no proportion in width to the Léna, for even after its junction with the Missouri the two together are not above three miles wide, and the average is not more than three quarters of a mile. Our information in Siberia concerning the Léna is confirmed by Dobell, a very good authority, from his having followed its course the whole length two or three times. He says, its length, from its source to Yakutsk, is 2600 versts, and from thence to the sea 2370, and receives in its course sixty rivers and torrents. He cannot well be mistaken, and he quite agrees with what we heard ourselves. The Kéang is equalled by many Siberian rivers.

The confluents of the Léna are themselves very considerable. The Vityme, Olékma, Aldan, Viluiy, are among its tributaries, each of them having a course of many hundred miles. The Viluiy falls into it about 300 versts below the town of Yakutsk, and its name signifies that it has many turnings. It has several cataracts, which are unusual here, and though imperfectly known, is supposed to contain many objects of interest to the naturalist. Some years ago Professor Laxmann discovered in it two stones with which science was previously unacquainted. The one was named the Viluiyothe or Idiocrase, the other, which we possess, the Olintholite. The latter is a yellowish green garnet, and remarkably hard. In the neighbourhood of this river are some large mountains of transparent mineral salt, and several fountains of salt-water. These mines, however, are not worked from want of population, and from there being other mines on the river Kuta, which also falls into the Léna, above the town of Kirinsk, which fully supply the province of Yakutsk with this necessary article of existence. At the point where the Viluiy falls into the Léna, is the rendezvous of the fishermen, who salt their fish there, before it is distributed over that vast province.

There are said to be found occasionally in the Léna a sort of sterlet, which have all the appearance of the common fish of that name, which become poisonous to those who eat them; and that the fact of a fish that possesses these properties being able to exist, is clearly proved from the circumstance of all the fish here being taken alive in nets. The Léna, through a

great part of its course, is surrounded by high mountains, which come close down to its banks. The neighbourhood, for the most part, is very thinly peopled, and it is rare to meet with any other habitations than the post-houses which are regularly established throughout.

CHAPTER V.

Frozen Soil.—Talc.—Minerals.—Mode of reckoning Distances among Yakuts.—Their Mode of Self-Government.—Origin.—Summer Huts.—Food.—Superstitions.—Tonguses.—Baron Wrangel's Polar Expedition.—Mr. de Hedenström.—Count Speranski.—Pugachéf.—His Successes and Death.—Petro-Paulofski.—Trade with Kirghis.—General Russian Frontier Trade.—Our Rivalry with them.—Omsk.—Cossacks.—Settlement from thence to near the Frontier of Thibet.—Gold Sands in Steppes of the Kirghis.—Schools and *Etat Major* at Omsk.—Winter sets in.—Semipolatinsk.—Chinese Frontier.—Trade with Chinese.—A *Chasse*.—Mr. Karéline.—Journey to Ust-Kamenogorsk.—Altai.

Between four and five hundred versts below the town of Kirinsk, and almost at the point where the government of Yakutsk commences, the Vityme, a very large river, falls into the Léna. From hence northward the ground is frozen the whole year round to a greater or less depth. The Vityme at its mouth is wider than the Léna. At no great distance from it are the mines of *sluda*, a transparent *mica*, or talc, known by the name of Russian glass. It is found sometimes in laminæ two feet square, and is used in many houses instead of common glass. These mines belong to a merchant who employs a great number of workmen in excavating them, and though this mineral is found in many other parts of Siberia, it is nowhere else worked in any great quantities. Near the village of Olekmynsk, between six and seven hundred versts further, on the left bank of the Léna, the Olekmà falls into it. At this point the Léna is already three versts broad.

The source of the Aldan is not very far from those of the Vityme and Olekma, and in this neighbourhood are caught the best sables, which, from the convenience of water communication, are sent to the more distant markets. In summer the water conveyance down the Léna is rapid and agreeable, and the views presented by the mountains often very picturesque, but the ascent is proportionably slow.

In the vicinity of Yakutsk they have a curious way of measuring the distances by land, which appears to be peculiar to this people; the Kirghis have something analogous, but not similar to it. As the old German mode of reckoning distance was by time (the *stunde*), so do the Yakuts calculate by the time required to boil their food in cauldrons with which each *yourte* is furnished. This consists of the bark of fir and larch, which does instead of bread, not the outside, but a thin inner pellicule, which grows between the outer bark and the wood, and which marks every year the growth of the tree. This takes an hour to boil in these cauldrons, and the distance which can be performed in this time is called *keusse*. They have the *keusse* on foot and on horseback, which are of course very different. It must always be a most inaccurate way of judging of distances, as it must vary according to the state of the roads, and the speed of horse and man.

The Yana is another very large stream, which has a parallel course with the Léna, and falls also into the Icy Sea. It rises in the Verkhoyanskaia Mountains, which we have before mentioned, a little distance from which there was, fifty years ago, a silver mine that was

worked, and from whence the ore was sent to a foundry on the Aldan; it has, however, been abandoned from the difficulty of transport. The Ynedigyrka, the Kolymá, and Anadyr, are the other very large rivers of the north-eastern region, and the Anuiy also falls into the Sea of Okhotsk, as well as the latter, after traversing a vast line of country. There are many others which, in any other part of the old world, would be immense, but which are here little regarded from there being so many of much greater extent.

The tribes who inhabit the north-east and western divisions, may be divided into four principal ones, exclusive of other smaller ones in the islands belonging to the north-eastern parts, and the purely Russian population, Yakuts, Tonguses, Yukaghires, and Tchuktches. The former are divided into communities, which are governed by *golovás* and *knaizetzes* or ancients. The first are chosen among the second, and they from and by the common people; all, however, are subject to provincial commissaries appointed by the Russian government. From the resemblance between the Russian word *knäs* or prince, and *knaizetz*, the latter got the title of *highness* in Russia, but the Yakuts before the Russian conquest even never had independent princes. The title of *golová*, on the contrary, being one of very slight importance in Russia, they were placed below the *knaizetzes*, though at home they enjoy much higher rank and authority. From the similarity of some Turkish and Yakut words, they are supposed to be of Turkish origin, but all that is known of them is, that they formerly inhabited the country much farther south about the Angará; that

they were expelled from it by the Burates, and took refuge in their present abode. They call themselves *Sakha*, or *Sakhaly* in the plural, and the meaning of the word *Yakut* given them by the Russians is not known. As the Amur is called by the Mongols *Sakhalien Ula*, it would seem as if there is some connexion between them. They are a more sedentary people than most of their neighbours, and only migrate to find fresh pasture for their cattle once a year. Their summer huts are made of birch bark, of which strips are sewed together with horsehair. In autumn they return to their wooden sheds in the forests adjacent to the meadows where the hay is made and stacked up. These are covered over with a thick coating of cowdung, which keeps them warm, and they are not troubled with the smoke, from having chimneys which carry it away. These are wooden pipes well guarded from the fire by a thick plaster of clay and cowdung. The hut contains one window, always to the right of the entrance, which is filled up with a large block of transparent ice, which they scrape clean from the rime frost which attaches itself to it, when the pipe is stopped up at night. Their usual beverage in summer is the *kumysse*, made of fermented mares'-milk, which the Kirghis also drink, and their food consists of the thin under skin of the larch or fir boiled with fresh milk or curds. The richer classes eat butter and fat with it; many of them have a hundred cows and horses. The cold prevents their keeping sheep, goats, pigs, or poultry. Close to the Frozen Ocean, they have neither pasturage, cattle, nor horses, in lieu of which they keep a large stock of dogs for their fishing expeditions, and in the

breeding season they take a great quantity of wild fowls' eggs. Hunting and fishing enable them to pay their taxes, and purchase some few necessaries of life. Those who live far from the towns, and who should naturally be less civilized, possess many virtues and good qualities, which those whose partial civilization has created for them wants which it cannot supply have lost. These people consequently are not ashamed of practising many villanies in order to obtain what have become necessaries to them, and are happily unknown to their more remote brethren. They have certain superstitions, which are so singular as to be worth relating, of which we shall, however, enumerate only one or two.

The flesh of the *gelinotte*, or white partridge, very common in all the northern parts of Europe and Asia, is of a much whiter colour than that of any other sort of game. These people imagine they know why it has monopolized so much of this whiteness, which other birds possess in such small quantities. Their belief is, that it was formerly one of the largest birds in creation, and that being very proud of its size and force, it yielded to no creature in rank and consequence. One day in its flight it met the *Tang-ara*, one of their divinities, in mid-air, and being of a large size, it would not make way for the god, and as a mark of contempt, brushed him with his wing in passing. To punish this arrogance, its white flesh was immediately distributed among all the other birds, and from that time it has only been of the size we now find it.

Another equally ridiculous notion, and which they show their faith in by constantly acting up to it in

summer, is, that there are certain stones, which have the faculty of troubling the air, or producing a sudden change in the temperature. This is an ancient superstition, and probably was so generally adopted, that more than a hundred years ago, in the reign of the Empress Anne, an ukase was issued, prohibiting, under severe penalties, the use of these stones. All classes at Yakutsk, both high and low, are firmly persuaded that they have the power of producing at will rain or cool wind, for neither more nor less than nine successive days, when the proper forms are gone through to procure it. The stone must be well authenticated as having been found in the stomach of an animal; the more savage the beast, the more efficacious is the stone, so that one found in a bear is the most highly prized; then that in a wolf, &c., &c.; a horse, or any domestic animal, considerably less so. It is called the *ssatà*, and the manner of using it is simple enough, and has no pretension to sorcery, or any of the black arts, like their professors, who pretend to divine the future destinies of their dupes. To procure rain, the person must rise before the sun, and the instant he catches a glimpse of it above the horizon, dip the stone in spring water, and holding it between the thumb and forefinger of the right hand, present it to the orb of day. At the same time he must make three pirouettes in the direction opposite to that of the course of this luminary, and the charm is completed. In order to obtain a cool wind for nine days, the *ssatà* must be dipped in the blood of a bird or beast recently killed, and presented to the sun with the same turnings as before. All those who travel in this country in the

summer, are tormented by the heat and insects, which are almost intolerable. As soon as they leave a town, they send a Yakut, with the commission to find some one who possesses this treasure, and when he is found, for a few ounces of tobacco the process is gone through the following morning, and the traveller has nothing more to fear for nine days from the heat or musquitoes. We possess one of these charmed pebbles, which was given to Mr. de Hedenström by a *golová* of Verkhoyansk, and was found in the paunch of a wolf. It is a round piece of quartz, not transparent, about the size of a marble, which possibly had been washed in some mountain stream for centuries, till it became perfectly smooth and round, and was swallowed by a wolf who came to drink. Its virtues, however, have never been tested since it went out of the *golová's* possession; but Mr. de Hedenström is convinced of the man's sincerity, when he assured him it was found in a wolf. That this superstition is of very ancient date, and is derived from the Huns, we have the authority of Gibbon, who says that Attila was dreaded, not only as a warrior, but as a magician, and that he, by this means, vanquished the Khan of the Gèougen. The fears of the Gèougen had reference to some such apparent act of sorcery as this, for they believed that the Huns could excite at pleasure storms of wind and rain. This phenomenon is stated in the history of Timur Beg to have been produced by a stone called *gezi*, to whose magic power the loss of a battle was also ascribed by the Mahometan Tatars of the fourteenth century.

The Tonguses are one of the most numerous

tribes, and are scattered over a great extent of country. Some are settled in the districts about the sea of Okhotsk, and are called *Lamutes*, from the word *lam*, which signifies *sea*. They are of Mandtchu origin, and their dialect differs but little from it; their religion is that of the Dalai Lama of Thibet. The Yukaghires, a nomadic tribe, are found near the Icy Sea, between the rivers Léna and Kolymá. They were formerly a much more numerous nation, called Omoks, and quitted their country towards the end of the seventeenth century on account of the ravages of the small-pox, of which vast numbers perished. They are said to have passed the Icy Sea with their reins, and to have found an asylum in the islands at the mouth of the Yana and Ynedigyrka. Some probable remains of the poles of which their *yourtes* were made, have been discovered, and as there are a great number of islands yet unexplored, they may possibly still exist in some of them, or have even proceeded to the continent of America.

There is little difference between the customs of the Yukaghires and Tonguses. A few of them who lost their reins settled on the upper and lower Anuiy rivers, which fall into the Kolymá, near the town of Nijni-Kolynsk, where Wrangel mentions the thermometer to have fallen on the 5th of January to – 57°. They have forgotten their natural idiom, and speak Russian; they are only about three hundred. We have before mentioned their manner of killing the wild-deer. The Tchuktches nominally appertain to the province of Yakutsk, but are in reality an independent tribe, numbering ten thousand souls. More than a century ago an expedition was sent to daunt

them from Tobolsk to the vicinity of the river Anadyr, but it was unsuccessful. Some forty years after, they were again so formidable to the borderers on the Kolymá, that an *Ispravnik* was sent against them, who succeeded, by mild means, in reducing them to peaceable habits. In this manner they learned the advantages of becoming traders; and, since that time, they come regularly to exchange their furs, mammoth, and wolves' bones, for articles of iron and copper, and tobacco. Their own country being a desert, they have, of course, none of the necessaries of life, but such as are found on the animals who share with them the waste. Many are baptized; but its efficacy is questionable, as they only see the priest once a year when they come for the fair, and then they are so completely absorbed in bartering, that it is not probable religion should make any very strong impression upon them. The difficulty of explaining to them, in a dialect but little understood, the dogmas of Christianity, is also a serious impediment in the way of their real conversion.

It may not, we hope, be considered misplaced in the short sketch we have given of some of the principal streams and nations of North and East Siberia, to add a few observations on a remark in the introduction to Baron Wrangel's account of his Polar Expedition, as to our friend Mr. de Hedenström's views of the extent of unexplored land in the far east. This gentleman resides at the farthest extremity of West Siberia, and Baron Wrangel's account was never published in Russia; it was, therefore, not easy for him to obtain the German publication at that great distance,

nor did circumstances enable him to take the same means of replying to those parts of the work in which his name frequently occurs. Baron Wrangel says, "Convinced now of the limited extent of New Siberia towards the east, Hedenström relinquished his original intention of spending a summer there;" and in another place, "As we had now arrived at a part of the sea which had been visited by Hedenström in 1810, I thought it useless to proceed further in that direction." It should seem, therefore, that Hedenström despaired of being *able* to proceed further, and that the means which Baron Wrangel had at *his* disposition, of accomplishing such an object, if possible, were no better suited to the undertaking than Hedenström's. But the Baron has quoted from him what those means were, and has made it very clear in his own account that he had far more adequate assistance from government. We will now add what we have heard from Hedenström himself, and what the Baron does *not* state.

Hedenström passed three years, 1808, 1809, and 1810, in the same regions as Wrangel, and among other things discovered New Siberia. Having completed his term, he returned to Irkutsk, in 1811, to make his report. In this he stated, that from two of the islands in the North-Eastern Archipelago, those of *Thaddéus*, and the *Cauldron*, he imagined he could see land, which could not be reached by dogs, as it was only approachable from the sea side, which is not frozen in the month of March. It was at that time matter of astonishment that the sea in such a northern latitude should be navigable at that season, or even at all, but

Baron Wrangel has confirmed the fact. In the year 1820 the expedition under the Baron's orders was undertaken; its objects were to verify Mr. de Hedenström's accounts, and to endeavour to reach the supposed tracts of land hitherto unexplored. His means of accomplishing something beyond what Hedenström with eight assistants only had done ten years before, were ample, while the latter's health was totally destroyed by rheumatism, and he had not adequate supplies for proceeding farther. Count Speranski, then Governor-General of Siberia, was charged by the Emperor to organize the expedition, and he desired Hedenström, who was then at Irkutsk, to draw up a statement in detail of the necessary expenses which must be incurred. Knowing well the misery the wretched inhabitants of these countries had suffered ten years before from having to bear the burden of his own expedition, Hedenström represented to the governor-general the hardship it would be upon them, to be saddled with another, and of a far more costly description, even after the lapse of so many years. They were obliged to furnish him with dogs and maintain them for a most trifling remuneration, the whole expense of the expedition being, in the three years for nine persons, 16,000 roubles, or not quite 800*l*. He, consequently, begged Count Speranski to relieve him from the disagreeable task of taxing these poor wretches again. The Count, a man of extreme benevolence and proper feeling, accordingly desired him to make the scale of allowances such, as to indemnify the inhabitants for the future expedition, as well as for the losses they had sustained by his. The sum allowed this time was

90,000 roubles, or five times what it was before. Baron Wrangel, who is an expert astronomer, erected an observatory at his head-quarters, and had all the instruments required for laying down a chart of the coast, as well as determining the latitude and longitude of the different places with the greatest accuracy. Hedenström's instruments were an old astrolabe, a wooden octant with an imperfect casing, and a common ship's compass which he found at a merchant's at Ust-Yansk. The astrolabe had four *dioptres*, and as he only used them in a vertical direction, two were sufficient; so he placed the other two in the box of the compass in the direction of the meridian of the needle, and made use of them to take the angles with. His latitude he calculated by observations of the sun's altitude at mid-day, or the polar star at night. The disk of the octant was broken, and he was obliged to use the astrolabe in the latter operation, which was most painful from the extreme cold, the height of the star, and the copper which burned the hand when touched. For longitudes he had nothing but his watch to calculate his distances by time, and an old map of Admiral Sarytchéf's, which he made as lieutenant in the expedition of Captain Billings, in 1787.

The result of Wrangel's labours proved, as far as Hedenström was concerned, that his map was pretty correct, but that his latitude was less by *one degree* than that laid down by the Observatory; and his longitude *two and a-half* degrees more east than was correct. So much for the difference of the sixteen, and ninety thousand roubles! We will now give Hedenström's own views of what he thought might have been done,

if his wants had been adequately supplied. He is convinced that to the north of the most eastern part yet explored, (Kolymá, the country of the Tchuktches) there is land, and for the following reasons.

In May, 1810, being at sea two hundred and forty versts N.N.E. of Cape Argali, or Bear Cape, as it is called in Wrangel's map, he saw before him a light-blue ray, which by its colour and fixed position announced land in the distance. A thick fog, caused by the snow which fell about mid-day, slightly impeded his view, but a ray of the same description was from time to time discernible in a southern direction, where he knew the country of the Tchuktches to be, and a still darker point he was convinced must be Cape Schelagskoi, though he did not venture to mark it on his map. The soundings constantly diminished, and in a few versts fell from eleven and a-half to eleven fathoms. Northward it was cloudy, and the bed of the sea seemed to be higher in that direction. The fissures in the ice from time to time impeded his progress, but, at last, one of sixty feet wide stopped him altogether, and showed a rapid current towards the S.W., or in a straight line between him and Behrings' Straits. On some of these fissures he observed soil of a totally different description to that of the main land, but very like that of New Siberia, although it is too distant to allow of the supposition that it had been carried so far. It was more probable that it should have come from the presumed land northward, which is very likely to be the same substance as that of New Siberia. He saw also a white owl, and several flights of wild geese, all bearing in the direction of the blue

ray, and he thinks they were going to build there, it being the season when they would naturally quit the water for a period. When Captain Cook entered the Icy Sea from Behrings' Straits, he was immediately stopped by floating ice, and Brotton, who accompanied him, was of opinion that this indicated the proximity of land. Captain Clerke, on whom the command devolved after Captain Cook's death, made the following year another attempt to proceed northwards, but was again stopped by the ice. He, however, observed an opening towards the north, and had the same fog which Hedenström considered as one of the proofs of there being land before him. The ice-bergs would naturally be carried by the wind which swelled Captain Clerke's sails, in the same direction, and if the sea northward in Hedenström's time was open, they ought to have continued their course in that same line, till they were stopped by some shallow, which would have been another proof of land not being far off. And Hedenström thinks this was the cause of Captain Clerke being stopped, though we have no account of his soundings at the farthest point to which he reached. The fog, which is caused in summer by the exhalations, which are then stronger than when the temperature of the air is more analogous to that of the water, would have prevented the sight of land, if even as near as he imagined it. Two other circumstances may seem to strengthen such an opinion, though of themselves insufficient to satisfy the sceptic, and there may be such an one who does not wish to be convinced.

In 1762, a Russian serjeant, Andréef, was sent from the Kolymá northwards, in one of the small *baidares*, or

boats covered with skins, to explore those regions. On his return, he presented a sketch of a large inhabited country in that direction. Captain Billings, afterwards, in going by land from the Kolymá to the country of the Tchuktches, was accompanied by a non-commissioned officer, a Cossack Kobéléf, who had learned at Anadyrsk the *patois* of these people. He related that he had heard from the Tchuktches, that the vicinity of Cape Schelagskoi formerly contained a numerous nation, called Schelagues, with whom they were at constant war—that this nation was ultimately conquered, and fled with their reins to a large country to the northward, where they settled, and that the Tchuktches took possession of the cape which they had evacuated. As Hedenström had proved, that, in the month of March, the sea is open considerably to the north-west of this point, it appears a fair inference that it should also be open then, and that the ice should be arrested in its progress by shoals or land, rather than that the sea should be frozen at a later period of summer, and much to the south of the spot where it is known to be open.

So satisfied was Hedenström of being able to realize his plan, and of getting across to Hudson's Bay, that he drew up a singular scheme of operations, which were laid before the late Emperor, and fully approved of by him. The events of 1812 and 1813 prevented it being put into execution; and Hedenström's health had suffered so seriously, that he would afterwards have been unable to attempt so difficult an enterprise. The question of the practicability and the inutility of a north-west passage is now set at rest.

We confess that Baron Wrangel's objections to some of these arguments do not appear to us to be very valid. He thinks that Hedenström and himself went to the same point in the same direction, and that the former's soundings were incorrect, from want of proper tackle. At all events, admitting his measurements not to be perfectly accurate—relatively to each other, at least, they probably were so—he could not mistake between eleven and eleven and a half fathoms in two soundings: he must have known whether they were the same or not, though in each case they might be a little more or less than he fancied them. The appearance of the geese flying northwards Wrangel does not admit as an argument, though he thinks if they had been seen returning southwards, *that would* have been conclusive of land to the north. We cannot see that it follows, that because no one was there to watch them, that they did not return in autumn; and we think that, supposing them to hatch on shore at all, which the Baron cannot well doubt, they were as likely to be seen on their way to build their nests as bringing their brood away. The other points the Baron has not noticed, and perhaps never had an opportunity; but, individually, we are convinced that, if Hedenström had had the same facilities of continuing his researches as Wrangel enjoyed, he would have set the question at rest, so as not even to have made a second expedition necessary.

When we stopped on the south-western frontier of Siberia, we did not meditate making a start direct to the antipodes, which we fear has been tedious to our readers; but some general account of a country

little known, and still seldomer visited, was necessary, from the total want of resemblance between its southern and northern inhabitants, manners, climate, and productions. Of these we shall speak in their turns. The country we are now to carry our readers through is for some distance extremely monotonous, and has little to interest those, at least, who are unacquainted with the locality. Trifles, which, for want of other more exciting subjects, serve to mark particular spots in the traveller's memory, are here magnified into events; but they are only so to the individual who has, by habit, made them interesting to himself.

For some distance after entering Siberia, the Steppes are more complete than before; the villages are generally built on the side of a large lake, which furnishes water for the natives and their cattle, and domestic animals are in great abundance.

In one of these little villages through which we passed, the notorious rebel and impostor Pugachéf, had exercised his artifices with success; and they told us, as we changed horses, of this event in their history. As the circumstances were at the time important and curious, it may not be misplaced to give some account of this extraordinary personage, against whom, and some others, an anathema is still read in the Russian churches, on certain occasions. He was by birth a Cossack of the Don, and a deserter from his tribe. Fearful of apprehension, he betook himself to the vicinity of the Ural, and was some time concealed among the sectaries who were very numerous there. A mutiny which had taken place some time before, and was still unquelled, among the Cossacks of the Yaik,

(whose name, as we have already mentioned, was in consequence changed) and the band of brotherhood always created among those who agree in nothing else but schism in religion, favoured his enterprise. Having fallen in with a body of the mutineers, Pugachéf boldly announced himself as the late Emperor Peter III. He stated, that attempts had been made to assassinate him, but that he had made his escape; that the Empress Catherine had circulated rumours of his death, and even caused his body to be exposed to public view, but that it was a weak invention of the enemy, the proof being, that he was there among them, to claim their aid and allegiance. Some of his followers probably believed his story, while others required but little persuasion to go on in the course of rebellion they had long pursued. Personal courage he undoubtedly possessed; and though he bore no sort of resemblance to the late Emperor, none of those who were likely to join him had any opportunity of judging on that point. He began by blockading the town of Yaitsk, where he was however foiled by the intrepidity of the garrison. Abandoning this attempt, he marched towards Orenburg, and on his road defeated some regular troops who were sent against him. He then laid siege to the town itself; but some supplies being thrown into it, his *coup de main* was unsuccessful. During the winter he was joined by a large body of Calmucks; and having committed all sorts of excesses, advanced towards Ekaterinburg, a wealthy and important town. He would probably have had no great difficulty in making himself master of it, but for a report of a large body of men being sent against him, which caused him to delay

his undertaking. As the people were everywhere for him, he found no difficulty in obtaining provisions and ammunition, and for a long time professed great moderation, and even declared his intention of resigning the crown to his son, and of retiring into a monastery, as soon as he had put down the rebellion. Elated with success, and, like most others of his class, knowing better how to bear adversity than prosperity, he soon threw off the mask, and committed the most horrible atrocities, to the great injury of his cause. His followers were all among the lower orders, and on one occasion, that they might not observe that he did not understand German, having many officers of that nation about him, he wantonly massacred them all.

At length, a Prince Golitzin, with a strong detachment, surprised him, and he retreated with great loss into the neighbourhood of Orenburg, where his troops were totally routed, and he himself with great difficulty escaped. He contrived, however, to collect his scattered forces, and once more made head against the Imperial arms. All of a sudden he appeared before Casan, and burned the suburbs, laying siege to the citadel into which the governor and garrison retired. His success, however, was short lived: a body of troops coming up, his army was cut to pieces, and once more he fled for his life. With three hundred of his most desperate followers he crossed the Volga, and was for the last time reinforced by seventy thousand men, so that he had at one moment an idea of marching to Moscow, where he had emissaries actively employed in stirring up the discontented and seditious. Peace was however just concluded with the Turks, and he

feared he should have all the disposable forces of the empire upon his shoulders, and abandoned the project. Giving way still more to his headlong passions, and wantonly committing the most revolting atrocities, he hastened his fate. Count Panin, on his return from the siege of Bender, was detached against him, and his army once more completely routed. Deserted by most of his adherents, the rest endeavoured to persuade him to surrender on condition of pardon, to which he would not listen, and those who had failed to induce him to yield, did not hesitate to betray him. He was made prisoner, and delivered up to General Suwarrow, afterwards so celebrated for his Italian campaign. He was beheaded at Moscow, in January, 1775, after having made full confession of all the circumstances of his short but eventful career. Such is the substance of Archdeacon Coxe's account of this singular transaction, and it is the most detailed and correct one we have, as he was shortly afterwards in Russia, and heard much of the history from those who had taken an active part in it. It will not seem extraordinary, that, in a little distant village, on the borders of Siberia, which had been one of the scenes of his exploits, they should still think it sufficiently interesting to amuse a traveller, who was waiting in a Cossack cottage for horses.

The bad weather had now set in; we were three days and nights in doing 520 versts; and though we had some very fine and even hot weather on the Chinese frontier some time after, winter dated from September 30. October 2. Snow fell thick two nights before we reached Petro-Paulofski, and we began to anticipate the neces-

sity of giving up our comfortable carriage sooner than we had expected. Had we known as well as we did afterwards how much better it is to travel in the *kibitka* of the country, even in the extreme cold, we should not have dreaded the change as we did. If we were to make the journey again, even in summer, we should at once do as they do at Rome, which is, after all, generally the best way to get on.

Petro-Paulofski is a straggling town of low wooden houses, containing a small citadel, a caravanserai, several churches, and a number of shops, where there are a greater variety of European articles to be found than could be expected in a place which seems to have dropped from the clouds in the centre of the Steppes. The day after our arrival was market-day, and such a motley assemblage of cavaliers we had never before seen assembled. They were most of them Kirghis; the chiefs, in their holiday dresses, were picturesque from their ugliness, the varied colours of their embroidered *kaftans*, and loose mis-shapen inexpressibles. Camels without number were threading through the narrow streets, or amusing themselves when tied up to the posts in the market-place, while their owners were haggling for skins and tallow, by bellowing forth the most discordant sounds that ever assailed an unhabituated ear. Before entering the town we crossed the river Ishim on a large bridge of boats. There is an immense magazine here attached to the custom-house—for the traders all pay duty—in which we saw a far greater amount of goods of all descriptions than we could have had any idea of. They manufacture in their own way, and the specimens we saw were by no means

contemptible. Every way of converting leather to a useful purpose is adopted, and the skill displayed in their costumes is really astonishing. Much of the merchandise comes from a great distance, as may be supposed from the fact of fifteen millions of roubles being the amount of goods that passed through the custom-house in 1840.

The Kirghis are said to be singularly honest and faithful to their promises, though we have heard it hinted that a little longer acquaintance with their Russian neighbours can hardly fail to initiate them in the mysteries of fraud and chicanery. The character of the indigenous Siberians is said to have changed materially for the worse since they came into such close contact with their conquerors, those especially who are sent there in the shape of government *chinovniks*. The Kirghis have a court of conscience in all these towns, to whose jurisdiction and fiat they must submit in case of any dispute; the system for them is a good one, if it works well at least, as they escape, at all events, the delays and expense of lawsuits, which, however bad in every country, are without a parallel in Russia. We heard here an amusing anecdote that had occurred a short time before, and had furnished matter to be decided by this tribunal. Two Kirghis found a live mouse in a sack of flour, which was a novelty to them, and excited their astonishment exceedingly. A Kirghis will eat anything eatable, alive or dead, and one proposed to the other to give him a sheep if he would swallow the mouse alive. The bargain was made in an instant, and the mouse as quickly slipped down the cannibal's throat. The other, however

repented of his part of the bargain, although the carcase of a sheep is an article of very trifling value there. He accordingly demurred, and was summoned before the court of conscience, who condemned him to pay the forfeit of his folly.

In addition to the traffic going on with the Kirghis daily and weekly, there are periodical arrivals and departures of extensive caravans for Thibet, Bokhara, and Kokhan. Armenians, Bokharians, Kirghis, and many other wanderers, known under the general name of Tatars, pass continually backwards and forwards on their trading expeditions, being able to cross the Chinese and other frontiers without molestation, which Russians cannot do. No passport is given by the Russian authorities for these countries, though, in fact, many do venture over their boundary, especially into Mongolia. The Chinese are, of course, well aware of their being strangers, but as long as they behave well, no difficulties are made, at least with the common people. If it were known that persons of a higher class were in the habit of so intruding, their jealousy would immediately attribute such a proceeding to improper motiyes. We are aware that such a circumstance occurred in the summer of 1840, when a remonstrance was made by the court of Pekin to St. Petersburg. Silk and cotton goods, coarse woollen carpets, calicoes, dried fruits, and turquoises, are the common articles of exchange against leather, furs, glass, iron, and common crockery, of which latter great quantities are annually exported. The principal business as yet is done by barter, especially with the Kirghis, though they will not be slow to learn the value of

money. The duty on imports into Russia at these points is two per cent., so that the net revenue derived from the custom-house at Petro-Paulofski in 1840 was three hundred thousand roubles, and it will doubtless increase every year.

English writers on this part of Russian commerce are completely in the dark as to the extent of it; and because general statements are made of the trade of this place or the other falling off, it is immediately inferred that their commerce on the whole is the reverse of thriving; but, from what we have seen at many different places, we are satisfied that this is not the case. When the various amounts of imports and exports are added together, all along the frontier from Orenburg to Kiakhta, the gross sum will, we believe, turn out to be far greater than people usually imagine. And here it is a complete monopoly; they have nothing to fear from competition with us on this side. We are well aware that, although for some time past British manufactures in Persia have been charged with a variety of vexatious drawbacks, which Russian goods are not subject to, in spite of everything we are able to undersell them, from the greater cheapness of production. But on this frontier line, where the raw material is mainly exported, there is no competition. We confess we regard the commercial jealousy which such pains are taken to increase between the two nations as excessively absurd. There is no reason why our interests need clash—the eastern continent is large enough for both parties; and if we succeed in establishing a regular trade at Canton by sea, there is no reason why Russia should not have her share overland by Kiakhta

for the northern provinces of China. Nothing, at all events, is to be gained by the constant bickerings which the commercial world—whom, with all due deference to the anti-corn-law league, we consider the real monopolists—love to excite. It is all very fine to talk of Circassian independence, but England has something else to think of than a crusade to the Caucasus, while those who cry out the loudest, and affect the purest sympathy for them, think in reality of the pounds, shillings, and pence, and how much saltpetre and other merchandise they would buy from us, if Russia was inclined to give us free passage.

We should place the owners of the *Vixen*, and the opium merchants at Canton, in the same category. Both parties were aware they were acting contrary to the declared laws of the country they had to deal with; success was a speculation, and there can be no speculation without risk of loss. These did not succeed, and we are involved in an expensive war for the sake of one party; and, had the wishes of the other prevailed, might now be saddled with another, and an equally unjust one. We are no advocates for Russian usurpation, and have heard a good deal from both sides of the question on the Circassian war, and each makes the case equally horrible. But we are also satisfied, that if policy is to be consulted in such matters, the less we interfere the better; the longer the war lasts, and there is no prospect of its termination, the more fatal will it be to Russia. The drain on her troops and treasury is far greater than generally supposed; seventy years have elapsed since its commencement, and it is no nearer to its close. The

present *champ de bataille* is not the Indian frontier; the territory of Russia, of which she has quiet possession, and to which the object of this atrocious war is to obtain a quiet passage, lies far beyond it. However much may be written as to the ultimate end proposed, the nature of the country is such as to show, that it is not for its riches or productions that the war is carried on. But were it mere Steppes, Russia would have the same interest in obtaining a secure road to her Georgian provinces, as if it were a paradise: we doubt much if it can ever become more than a passage, and if the natives did not molest her caravans, and attack her subjects, we believe that Russia would long ago have been satisfied. But her *amour propre* is become the principal moving cause, and she would not be contented *now*, perhaps, with what she would have jumped at twenty years ago.

There is a governor at Petro-Paulofski, and a captain-commandant, who entertained us hospitably. The journey from hence to Omsk, two hundred and eighty-five versts, occupied us thirty hours, and presented nothing worthy of particular observation. The river Irtysch washes its walls; we crossed it in a ferry, the stream being too rapid and broad to admit of a bridge being erected there. The town presents a good appearance from the opposite side of the water, and contains about ten thousand inhabitants. On entering from the river side, you come at once into the citadel, which is handsome, but not very strong. It has a moat and drawbridge towards the town, but no water in it. The Om, a tributary of the Irtysch, runs between the moat and the town, which serves the purpose

better, and has a bridge of boats over it. The governor-general, and the generals on the staff, live in the fortress, and most of the superior officers: the *Etat-Major*, hospitals, and military school, are also in it.

Omsk has only become the capital of West Siberia since three years ago; till then Tobolsk was the residence of the governor-general, and the change has not been popular with the officers. Tobolsk was in the direct main-road through both Siberias, or very little distance out of the way, while Omsk is on the very edge of the Steppes, and leads nowhere. Accommodations were far better in the former, and the facilities of obtaining the articles of every-day necessity much greater. Added to this, the expense is materially increased to the officers, who, as a body, being indifferently paid, are not likely to possess ample pecuniary means. At this moment Omsk is the dearest place in Siberia; almost everything must be sent from Moscow expressly; there are as yet no artisans of any kind, and every article, in short, must be paid for at the price of a foreign production. These things will, of course, be remedied in time; but, at present, the complaints are general. There were, however, good reasons which induced Prince Gortschakof, the governor-general, to advise the Emperor to change the seat of government. They were certainly not private considerations, for his expenses must be greater than at Tobolsk, and his house is by no means so good, as an official residence has not yet been built; and as he is obliged to make a tour of inspection once or twice a year through the vast district entrusted to his charge,

the central situation of Tobolsk was much more convenient to him.

But its very vicinity to the Steppes, which is disadvantageous to his subordinates, was to him the thing which gave it so much importance. One of the principal objects he had in view, was the organization of a Russian settlement through the Kirghis Steppes, in the direct line to Thibet. The distance, as the crow flies, from Omsk to the frontier of Thibet, is twelve hundred versts; through a part of this desert the natives are on friendly terms with the Russians. So soon, therefore, as a permanent settlement is established through the whole distance, immense advantages will be gained to Russian commerce. At this moment this object is accomplished nine hundred versts, or three quarters of the way. A line of Cossacks is permanently formed, provided with guns, ammunition, and all the necessaries for a fixed residence, which may be liable to hostile incursions from time to time. The Kirghis, however, stand in such awe of the Cossacks, and the benefits they derive from trading with Russia are such, that the caravans now go as securely the whole nine hundred versts, as in any part of the empire. Every summer sees some fresh point gained; and there is no doubt, that, in a very few years, the Russian dominion will only end where that of Thibet begins. They were, for some time, stopped by a district more desert and inhospitable than the rest, which was supposed to reach to the Thibetan frontier; but it has been discovered from a Cossack, who was three years prisoner in the country, that it only extends about ninety versts, and he

described the other side of it as being fertile, well watered, and altogether different from the ordinary Steppes. There will, therefore, probably be no farther obstacle to their progress, and a glance at the map will show that they are much nearer to our Indian frontier here, than by any other road they can take.

Once established *as far* as the boundary of Thibet, the Russians will have no great difficulty in obtaining a footing *in* it, and a transit for their merchandise to India would be a matter of course. In the last work published on Russia, we observe that the author had a long conversation with a Russian general of distinction on the subject of a conquest of India. Russian generals and diplomatists in general are not so communicative as Captain Jesse's acquaintance, who, on the whole, is more likely to have been endeavouring to gain information from him on the subject of India, than to enlighten him on the plans of Russian conquest. For our own parts, believing we have had far more opportunities than the captain of hearing such matters mooted, and never having heard any observations of the sort made,—on the contrary, the idea invariably laughed at and deprecated—we are very sceptical as to "the Russians having, not only the vanity to speak openly of it, but considering themselves certain of success whenever they choose to make the attempt." We are not, however, surprised at our differing in opinion here, because there is no *one general* observation of his in which we do agree, excepting as to the prevalence of corruption in the government *employés*, and the folly of the idea of our being supplied with corn by Russia: the latter too, perhaps, for a different

reason. His facts are very often as much at variance with reality, as his deductions unfounded.

The commerce with the Kirghis at Omsk is very considerable, and everything is done to encourage them. Skins are the principal article they bring to market, and they purchase gunpowder and stores from the authorities in return. The policy of allowing them to buy indiscriminately what might be turned against the vendors, or resold to those who are not on friendly terms with them, is questionable. But they are such cowards that no great danger is apprehended, though the Emperor's great aim is to gain over as many as possible by fair means. Their Steppes have for a few years been turned to advantage, considerable quantities of gold having been found in the sands. In the year 1840 the government of Omsk, which had previously not been considered one of those where this valuable mineral abounded, produced eighty-five puds, or above three hundred pounds weight, a good deal of it from the Steppes. The speculators having surveyed the ground, and satisfied themselves that it will answer their purpose to search for gold, hire a certain extent from the Kirghis, at a fixed yearly rent, in order to wash the sands. Whenever they discontinue their operations the land reverts to the owners, who find it in a more cultivable state from being cleared of the sand. They had great hopes of a considerable increase last year, and, it is probable, it will be frequently found in the deposits formed by the torrents from the mountains in the Chinese territory.

There is at Omsk a military school where five hundred boys are educated, who are to become soldiers,

most of them being soldiers' children, some few Kirghis, and the sons of exiles. The establishment is admirably conducted; we went over it several times, and nothing could exceed the regularity and order which prevailed. The school is managed on the Lancastrian system, military discipline being of course maintained; everything was extremely clean, and the food and beds excellent. There is another military school for Cossacks only, and the boys are destined for a different career in some respects from the others. We may safely defy any country in the world to produce an establishment in any way superior to this; our only doubt is if it is not too good for those who are brought up in it, considering what their future destination is likely to be. It consists of sixty boys who are noble, and a hundred and twenty common Cossacks. The building is handsome, the dormitories most comfortable, far more so than Long Chamber at Eton, and their dinners, of which we have partaken, excellent. The boys are taught drawing, algebra, languages, history, and fortification; the first class, who were all under seventeen years of age, studied principally the Oriental languages, and are intended for interpreters and agents in the East. We were told by General Schramm, who has the superintendence of the school, that most of those who composed the first class understood Mongolish, Arabic, and Persian, and have also native youths to teach them the *patois* of the Nomadic tribes. We saw boys of twelve years age go through their French lesson, which they pronounced and wrote from dictation with great fluency and accuracy. Several of the specimens of their drawings which we brought

away, show great talent, and, as we before said, our only doubt is, if they have not too many comforts, and are not educated a little above their sphere.

We cannot, however, wonder, when these pains are taken in the wilds of Siberia to educate boys for the services they are to perform as men, that Russian diplomatic agents should be so superior to our own, and the habit of thinking such a preparation must have created cannot fail to give them great advantages as negotiators and general agents. Their dinners consist of soup with meat and vegetables, exceedingly good porridge, plenty of bread and *qvass*, the substitute for beer in Russia, which we believe to be very wholesome, and find far from unpalatable, though travellers in general describe it as little short of poison. The breakfast and supper are something of the same sort; and the calculation is, that it costs twelve copeks, or one penny, per head per day. Government allows for the whole establishment sixty thousand roubles a year, which covers all expenses, and there must be good management to clothe, feed, and maintain a hundred and eighty boys, pay the salaries of the professors, the repairs of the buildings, and everything connected with the establishment on so small a sum, especially in a place where everything, except the common articles of food, is very dear. Bread is cheap, beef two copéks a pound, and game plenty; hares are seldom or never eaten, partly from a religious prejudice, and blackcock cost only fifteen copéks a piece; fish is tolerably plentiful, but not so abundant as further on in Siberia. Those boys who are not calculated for employment in civil departments, become officers of

Cossacks, but they can never quit the corps, or advance beyond the rank of colonel in it. Generals of Cossacks are always brought from other branches of the service. Considering the education they receive, and the qualifications they may be supposed to possess, we think these hard regulations, and they are so considered there by officers of other arms. A subaltern's pay in the Cossack corps is only a hundred and fifteen roubles a year, not six pounds; that of a captain three hundred, or fifteen pounds nearly. They have, it is true, a considerable portion of land allowed them, but their service on this frontier is so laborious, that they have little leisure for attending to agriculture. In fact their services are greater than those of the Don, without having the same emoluments and advantages. With so limited pay it is quite extraordinary how they can dress like officers and gentlemen, yet we saw them at a ball at Omsk, in well-made uniforms, and in nothing inferior to the other officers.

Another establishment, the *Caserne topographique*, is most admirably conducted, and reflects the highest credit on the officers of engineers by whom it is directed. The persons belonging to it are also soldiers' sons, who are employed as draftsmen; those of our readers who have seen the *Etat-Major* at Petersburg, will be surprised when we assure them that the one at Omsk, then under the direction of our excellent friend Baron Howen, and General Gorski, is in no way inferior to the one in the capital. The maps of the Caucasus, Georgia, Turkey, and in fact of all the western part of Asia, are done on a scale, and with a minuteness of detail, as well as skill, which we think cannot be

surpassed. Unfortunately they are not allowed to be published. In this establishment the young men become officers at the expiration of ten years' service; during the time they are in it they receive a hundred and twenty roubles a year, out of which a fund is created to make a little capital for them at the end of the ten years. Everything is in perfect order, their food and beds good, of which the linen is changed twice a month, and cleanliness is one of the virtues most strictly enjoined.

The society of Omsk is limited to the military, with few exceptions, but is exceedingly good, considering the size of the place, and the number of the inhabitants. We can never sufficiently express our thanks to Prince Gortschakof, for his hospitality and civilities; he is one of the most complete *grands seigneurs* we met with in Russia. Descended from Rurik, and enjoying high military rank and a good fortune, he is banished into Siberia as governor-general, instead of living in one of the capitals, whose society, from his noble bearing and amiable character, he is so calculated to adorn. But, as long as he remains in active service, no one can refuse a post; and so honourable a one as that of governor-general few would be disposed to abandon. We believe, however, that the known wishes of the Emperor, that he should continue to occupy it a few years longer, are the real secret of his retaining what would be to so many the highest object of their ambition. From Generals Schramm, Howen, Falkenberg, Olènitsch, and Potemkin, we also received the greatest kindness and hospitality: and however a late writer, to whom

we have before alluded, may deny the reality of Russian hospitality, we cannot too often repeat, that, as far as Europe is concerned, (our experience does not carry us much further) we have never found it equalled in any country.

We had several occasions of seeing some good shooting on the opposite side of the Irtysch, in the Kirghis Steppes, under the auspices of Baron Silverhielm, a Russian officer, of a Finland family, who, on the conquest of that country, made their election to stay on the winning side. We made a great massacre of hares, blackcock, and *gelinottes;* the former are much larger than English ones, but little valued, except by the sportsman and furrier. The Levitical law, which proscribed the flesh as unclean, is in some measure in force in the Greek church; and though many would be, doubtless, sufficiently unscrupulous to disregard it, the custom of not eating the hare so far prevails, that we do not remember ever to have seen it at a Russian table.

The weather during our stay here was fine and agreeable till the 5th, when we had 12° of Réaumur in the night, with wind and snow; and the little river Om was completely frozen over the next day, so that the ice was passable. The 7th, it became milder again, and the sun had almost disappeared. On this day, we started for Semipolatinsk, a town containing eight thousand inhabitants, situated on the Irtysch, almost at the foot of the Altai Mountains. We followed the line of Cossacks the whole way, and travelled more expeditiously than we had done in any part of our journey from Moscow. General Olénitsch, the

general of Cossacks at Omsk, although himself a little Russian, had kindly sent on to order our horses, so that we found everything in readiness, and the roads, on the whole, were very good. We found the greatest difference in the alacrity of the Cossacks, as compared to the Tatars, who are very indolent and slow. Our direction was southward, all along the Chinese frontier, and we found the temperature sensibly higher.

We arrived at Semipolatinsk, about mid-day, on the $\frac{10\text{th}}{22\text{nd}}$; and, from having had 12° of cold the night before we left Omsk, we had here certainly 20° of heat: a more complete summer day could not be seen. The last post before we arrived at Semipolatinsk lay almost entirely through a forest of deep sand; and, though we had eight horses, they had great difficulty in dragging the carriage along. We walked a great part of it with our coats off. The sun was so powerful, and the views so beautiful, that we lingered long to enjoy the Oriental scenery. Our route was along a high land—before us the Altai and the chain of mountains connected with it within the Chinese frontier, which embrace the vastest district of any mountain range on the surface of the globe. It is not one uniformly connected chain, it is true, but still a prolongation of the same, and under the name of Altai, Thian-chan, Kuen lun, consecutively, terminates in the gigantic Himalaya. The spaces between them are filled up by vast lakes, and in the Thian-chan are many volcanic phenomena, the most distant from the sea that exist in the world. Great numbers of considerable mountains branch off from them, many of them very rich in mineral productions, and many too imperfectly known to be described

by geographers. From Kamtchatka, then, to the Birman empire, is almost one continued series of mountains, only partially interrupted from time to time. The Altai, in the Turkish language, signifies Mount of Gold. It is uncertain whether it received it from the native gold found in its bosom, or whether the Kalmucks gave it this denomination from the number of ornaments of that metal which they found in the tombs about it.

The Irtysch, a fine and rapid river, was at our feet; on two sides of us a plain which reached as far as the eye could scan, still clothed in its summer garb—and the town of Semipolatinsk in the distance, all combined to make one of the most pleasing panoramas to be found even in a southern clime. This is, in fact, the garden of Siberia, and boasts one of the richest Floras to be met with in the northern parts of Asia. The immediate environs of Semipolatinsk, a circuit of twenty versts round the town, produce eight hundred different sorts of rare flowers and shrubs. Fruit-trees are not much cultivated, from the indifference of the inhabitants; but we saw grapes growing in the open air, and fit to eat. They do not, certainly, come to a high state of maturity, but they do ripen, and the roots are left all winter in the ground, covered up with straw. Baron Hüllesen, the *maître de police*, a most agreeable and gentlemanlike man, a Courlander, told us that he is a member of the Botanical Society at Moscow, and that he enriches their collection every year with a number of new plants and shrubs. It is surprising that plants which, in other countries, will not bear cold, resist it in such an

extraordinary manner here. About the middle of September, in this year, they had had 18° of cold, of Réaumur; and now, a month after, we found as many of heat. The extremes of both are excessive, but especially the latter. Baron Hüllesen told us, that, in summer, it is barely possible to sleep anywhere but in a cellar, from the overpowering heat and swarms of musquitoes and vermin of all descriptions. How vines can survive after a sudden cold of 18°, in the midst of such great heat, and grapes ripen a month afterwards, seems almost incredible, yet such is undoubtedly the fact. The cold of winter is not so excessive as the heat of summer, which is as high, sometimes, as 45°.

The naturalist could not choose a better situation for a summer residence than this neighbourhood. Insects, in great numbers, of sorts little known, are commonly found here. The tarantula is an inmate of almost every house; and though its bite is venomous, and requires very strong applications to cure it, the inhabitants are so accustomed to them, that they pay little or no attention to their presence. Opium is the general remedy. But the sportsman has the greatest temptation to make such a journey, there being hardly any kind of game, great or small, which is not plentiful in this neighbourhood and that of Buchtarminsk. We saw a variety of, to us, new sorts of grouse, and the francolini, which we have met with only on one or two occasions in Sicily. At some little distance over the frontier, the mountains teem with elks, deer of all kinds, the argali, or *Capra Ammon*, and the *Bos grunniens* of Linnæus. This animal is a native of Thibet, and is found of various colours, black, white, grey, and

brown. It has a long body, and the middle of the back seems to be indented, because the neck and rump are furnished with stiff upright hair, which consequently makes them appear higher. Some of them have horns. The head is small, and the neck thin and short, as well as the tail and feet small. The hair of the mane is short, but on the breast and upper part of the legs and tail it is seven or eight inches long. It is of a remarkably glossy, silky texture, and forms an article of considerable commerce in Thibet. The Chinese use it for tassels to their summer caps and standards, generally dyed scarlet, and the so-called horsetails on the Turkish standards are also made of it. The greater quantity comes from Tangout, and is dyed at Honghtcheou, the capital of one of the Chinese provinces, Tchi Kiang, celebrated for its silk manufactory. The animal does not low, but grunts like a pig, and is found, both wild and tame, on the western frontiers of China, in Tangout and Thibet. The archbishop of Tobolsk has one alive in his possession. The ibex we saw several fine specimens of; but nothing of this genus is to be compared to the argali, whose horns are immensely large, very spiral, and strong. We should think they were very formidable antagonists, if driven to self-defence. They are, however, very shy, and live in the most inaccessible spots, like the chamois.

The town of Semipolatinsk has more the appearance of a large straggling village, all the houses being of wood; but there are one or two rich merchants who are beginning to construct more solid and handsome edifices. The trade with China is here very

considerable, and may be greatly increased, if the idea of making it the emporium for merchandise, instead of Kiakhta, is ever realized. Count Cancrin is said to have entertained the project for some time past; but the obstinacy of the Chinese, and their unwillingness to make any change, though to their own advantage, has hitherto prevented it.

The river Irtysch forms the boundary of the two empires here, and the custom-house is on the other side of it. We bought some beautiful silks at a very reasonable price; they are called *canfer*, are exceedingly thick, beautifully embroidered, and generally of two colours, crimson on one side, and blue on the other; though they seem all one piece, they are so skilfully woven together, that you cannot perceive where they are joined. Little tea passes this way; but the exports from Russia are very great, the distance to Pekin being the same as from Kiakhta, and there being a saving of some two thousand versts to the merchants who bring their goods from Moscow in selling them here. About forty puds, or 1440 pounds weight of opium are generally imported into China yearly from this point; but in 1839 it was all seized and confiscated. Common crockery is a great article of export, as well as furs, leather, and iron. The precious metals are strictly forbidden to be exported from China; but two years ago a hundred and eighty puds of silver passed through the custom-house here, where the ingots are stamped. They are of different sizes, varying from the value of four to four hundred and fifty roubles; we obtained one worth forty roubles; they have a ship, and sometimes a shoe, with several

Chinese characters stamped on them. The *sycee* silver is prized in Russia, from its never having been refined by the Chinese, and its containing a certain admixture of gold, which is the case with all silver. It has also a premium in England on this account. In the one we possess the gold is very visible. The general name for these pieces of money is *Iamba*.

About four hundred and fifty versts over the frontier is a considerable Chinese town called Tschugotschak, where many subjects of Russia go every year in disguise; but it is contrary to the law of both countries, though we imagine the Russian authorities do not interfere much. We made the acquaintance, at Barnaoul, of an officer who had been there for some days the summer before; he described it as a large and populous town, defended with wooden stockades, with no appearance of possessing many people of rank among its inhabitants; it may probably be a penal settlement of the Chinese. It has a garrison composed of a thousand men, a commandant, a colonel, and fifteen hundred Mandtchus and Mongols. The garrison, who are Chinese, are there permanently; the others are sent from Ili, and are changed every year. It is in the direct road from Semipolatinsk to Peking, and not above eight hundred miles from it, so that the Chinese would probably be gainers by transferring the seat of commerce to this point; but so long as they think it would be advantageous to the Russians to do so, it is quite sufficient to make them object. Events now occurring at Canton may render them more reasonable. They purchase from the Russians a great quantity of young bucks' horns, which they often pay

a high price for, in order to distil from the roots of them *spirits of hartshorn*, a medicine very much in vogue there.

There is another great road from hence to Kar-Karali, in the Steppes of the Kirghis; and a little way off it there is a cavern, to which a grand superstition attaches. The path to this cavern leads through a narrow fissure in a rock a verst long, at the end of which is a ruined stair, which is mounted from the outside to get into the grotto. Here are two tents, the one blue and the other red; what is underneath them no one knows, no one dare examine. Two bold young Kirghis once ventured to do so, but before they had time to see anything, they were so maltreated by the guardian sprites, that they decamped in all haste. For this it is held in great awe by the Kirghis; if any of their cattle are ill, they offer food at the entrance of the cave, which is carried away by invisible hands. Many bones of argali and argoceros are, in fact, found there. This famous cave is in the Tchingis-Tau mountains, near the little river Tchaganka.

We were most hospitably lodged and entertained by Baron Hüllesen, for whom we had a letter of introduction from our friend Baron Howen, his *compatriote*, and the morning after our arrival, a *chasse* was organized for us, when we had a corroboration of the truth of what we had heard about the changeable nature of the weather, for instead of the hot summer's day we brought with us, the next was a bitter cold, windy morning, sleet falling pretty thick, and very unpromising for shooting. The preparations, however, were made, and out we sallied in half a dozen *chars à*

banc some seven or eight miles to the place of rendezvous, with half a company of soldiers for beaters. We killed a few hares and black-cock, but the weather was so bad, that we soon gave it up, our purveyors having taken care that there should be nothing wanting to fortify us internally against the cold from without. A fire was soon made in the woods, and we did full justice to our soup and cold provisions, not forgetting the champagne, which is a thing never omitted in any party whatever, from Riga to Kamtchatka.

By way of digesting our luncheon, a ceremony was performed, which, if we had not undergone the ordeal at a friend's house in the vicinity of Oranienbaum, with our lamented friend Prince Butera, would have astonished us no little. A dozen soldiers placed themselves in two files close to each other, and took up each of the party in turn in their arms and tossed them in the air, catching them again on their arms, and throwing them up again, as quickly as possible, a considerable height. This operation is performed very expertly; the patient, who understands the business, keeps his arms close to his sides, and his legs stretched stiffly out, and feels no sort of inconvenience. It is exactly like being tossed in a blanket. This is accompanied with singing some of their many pleasing, but monotonous national airs, to which the softness of the language gives a harmony they do not intrinsically possess. Monotonous they certainly are; but we confess we do like excessively to hear the *yemstchik* at night carolling his ditty as he goes along, though the burthen of it is always the same, and its meaning utterly incomprehensible. Captain Jesse makes an observation that the Russians have no

gaieté de cœur, and are the most stupid people in the world, except when drunk. This is as contrary to the experience of ourselves, as well as of all writers on Russia, as anything can be. Many have expatiated upon their extraordinary gaiety; and some have added, what is also true, that drunkenness does not change them, they are never churlish or impertinent. We should call them, to all appearance, the gayest people we know, and they certainly sing more than any other. We do not profess to be able to read the *cœur*, and can only judge of them by the exterior marks which usually indicate hilarity or the reverse. To call them stupid, too, is indeed a libel. Elmèn, who is far from drawing a flattering picture of Russians, says that they are often considered to have no character at all; but that, at least, they are *hospitable*, *merry*, and *fond of music*. Müller, Soltau, Frederick the Great, and indeed all the writers, ancient and modern, whom we have consulted, except the gallant captain, invariably agree with us in representing them as a very jocund, laughter-loving people.

When the business of tossing was duly completed, we started homewards, but at the first peasant's house we came to, we all alighted to drink champagne again, and never did we see so much disposed of in so short a time. Ourselves, the strangers in whose honour the *chasse* was got up, were of course called upon to bear the brunt of the attack, and we certainly never swallowed the juice of the grape so much *contre cœur*. In a small room heated to suffocation, tumbler after tumbler were we obliged to gulp down, as quickly as the bottles could be carried round, without any breathing

time or anything to eat with it. No sooner was this over, than we were jolted away at the rate of ten miles an hour on a machine without springs, till another peasant's house doomed us to stop, and again undergo the same penance. How much we did drink we should be sorry to say, and nobody would believe us, especially if we added that we reached our abode in a state of consciousness, but we know we were much the better for an hour or two's sleep before we joined the whist table. It is not to be supposed, that the hundredth part of the liquid sold and drunk for champagne ever saw the country of Moet; the consumption of Petersburg alone is a million bottles a year, and it is no exaggeration to say that it is drunk in every, the most distant, part of the Russian dominions. The quantity consumed at Mai-ma-tchin alone in the white month, when the fair at Kiakhta is held, is said to be something incredible, and be it what it may, the price there paid for it is not less than five and twenty roubles a bottle. That there is a good deal of genuine and excellent champagne imported we can vouch for, and it is probably most of it of foreign manufacture; the duty being very high it is a great source of revenue to the government. Good champagne at Moscow costs fifteen roubles.

We made here the acquaintance of a very agreeable person, well known to the scientific world of Europe, Mr. de Karéline, now acting the part of a naturalist, and attached to the department of Count Canerin, the minister of finance. He was making a scientific tour through the whole of East Siberia, and had collected a number of splendid specimens of

animals, plants, and objects of natural history. A former private assortment of his was sold some years ago to one of the learned bodies in Scotland, we think the University of Glasgow, for a large sum. He is one of those *êtres* essentially Russian, who possess the talent of ubiquity and acquaintance with everything more or less, who can make himself very generally useful to his government under the garb of the botanist and zoologist. He tempted us very much to join an expedition in which he was going the following spring into Dauria, with a good escort of camels and Cossacks, a country probably never yet explored by Europeans, and which would have had just enough of danger about it to make it an excitement. But we had five thousand versts between us and Petersburg, and did not venture to risk having to perform it *à la Cochrane* or worse, and indeed to spend another year without being able to get news from England was too much.

At Kar-Karali, about five hundred versts from hence, in the Steppes of the Kirghis to which we have alluded above, is a Russian settlement, established since 1823, at the base of the Ulutan Mountains, in latitude 50° N. and East longitude 75°. A sort of patriarchal government is formed among the Kirghis, chosen among themselves and guaranteed by the Russians, the president of which is in their pay, and is chosen every three years. His authority is, if necessary, maintained by Cossack bayonets, and he is assisted by a divan, of whom half is chosen by the Russians. Under these circumstances many years will not elapse before the great mass of these Nomade tribes, whose

numbers it is difficult to estimate correctly, though they are certainly very great, will be *bonâ fide* Russian subjects.

In the time of the Empress Catherine, a new mineral, the dioptaz, was discovered here by a man of the name of Ascher, who has given his name to it, which we are told exists nowhere else in the world. It is an oxide of copper and iron, formed in crystals, the colour of malachite, on a stratum of quartz: the crystals are of so friable a nature, that they can never be cut as stones. Thanks to Prince Gortschakof, we brought away a beautiful specimen of it in block, as well as a number of small detached crystals. Had the season not been so far advanced, we should have much liked to make an excursion to Tschugo-Tschuk, but it was too late, and we thought we had no time to spare; as it turned out, however, we might have accomplished it very well, as far as the time was concerned, for we lingered unnecessarily long in several towns.

We started from Semipolatinsk at mid-day the $\frac{12}{24}$th, with clear, fine weather, but cold at night. For forty versts we continued to pass through the usual open country till we came to the banks of the Irtysch again, which we had to cross, fortunately by day-light, in a rickety bark, but without much wind. The stream was rapid, but we made a good passage, and on the other side found ourselves in the territory of the Kirghis. They are perfectly peaceable in this neighbourhood, there is no necessity even for an escort; we saw every now and then their *kibitkas* at a distance, and the large cocks of hay for their cattle in the winter. The road was bad enough, and probably had

never had a carriage over it of the description we travelled in, but if we had not crossed the river, we must have made a *détour* of some twenty versts through deep and almost impassable sand. We followed the stream for twenty-one versts, when we re-crossed it, and by this time it was dark, and the opposite side presented to us precipitous crags with a village perched at the top, like an eagle's aery, which we did not see any possibility of our carriage and horses scrambling up. The latter, indeed, we left behind us to return to the post, but one hour was occupied in getting over. After some time had been lost in bawling to the people on the other side, a raft was seen in the obscurity coming across, but the stream was so rapid, it was a long while making the point where we were. When we got nearly over, the Cossacks threw themselves into the water with the greatest unconcern, though it was freezing hard, and by dint of hard labour succeeded in towing us to the landing-place. We were not long in getting to the post-house, and it is only on such occasions that one thoroughly enjoys the luxury of good tea with cream, which never failed us.

From this point the features of the country changed completely; from a dead flat which we had been so long accustomed to, we came all of a sudden upon a mountainous district with very picturesque scenery. This is the commencement of the lower chain of the Altai, which may be said to form the boundary of the Chinese and Russian empires. Flowers in profusion were beginning to hide their diminished heads under their winter clothing, which we should have found two days before in the bloom of summer. So sudden is

the transition from one season to another. Snow began to whiten the ground at night-fall, and the roads were bad and dreary; at two posts distance from the village we had to cross the little river Uba, which, by daylight, would have been a mere *bagatelle* to what we had done before, and were often to do again. The river, however, was partially frozen over, and the raft of a very fragile description, and by some bad management they contrived to let the hinder part of the carriage slip off into the ice, and there we were, stuck fast in the middle of the night, partially under water, and as may be supposed bitterly cold. There was nothing for it, but getting out, as best we might, and walking to the next village by moonlight, which was fortunately only two versts distance, and we contrived to get two or three hours' sleep, on a very clean table, before the carriage was in order to start again. The only loss was the time. Our misfortunes were only beginning, the roads were worse than can be imagined by anybody who has not been in such a country at the transition period, when there is not snow enough to go on sledges, and the ice and water make it next to impossible to go on wheels.

CHAPTER VI.

Detained.—Unable to cross the Ulba.—Bees in Siberia.—Crossing Ulba at Ust-Kamenogorsk.—Buchtarminsk.—Road back.—Pass the Uba.—Zménogorsk.—Mines of Silver.—Mode of working the Ore.—Crown Peasants.—Kolyvàn.—Minerals.—Deep Snow.—Barnaoul.—Mines.—Depôt of all the Gold east of the Ural.—Mode of melting it.—Search for Gold.—Society of Barnaoul.—Journey to Kusnetsk.—Biisk.—Snow Storm.—Severe cold.—Road to Tomsk.—Overtaken by Burán.—Sixteen Horses to Carriage.—Society of Tomsk.—Residence of Gold Searchers.—Writers on Russia.—Want of Liberty of the Press in that Country.—Effects of it.

In the next twelve hours we only accomplished eighty versts with eight, ten, and twelve horses harnessed to the carriage. Our object was to reach the fortress of Ust-Kamenogorsk that night, only ninety-five versts, but, when we came within fifteen versts of it, in passing a village, we made the discovery that a very rapid river, the Ulba, which we had to cross, was utterly impassable from the quantity of ice floating down it; the large floating bridge kept there to tow over passengers, had been removed that morning for the winter, and it was uncertain whether we could cross for two days. We made a merit of necessity, and put for up the night in comfortable quarters, awaiting in patience the intelligence which the morning should bring us.

The appearance of the country we had passed through, gave us hopes of finding good provisions, in which we were not disappointed. The undulations of hill and dale, every part well cultivated, promised good

Cossack quarters, and we found a hospitable reception. Excellent fish of several sorts, a variety of wild fruits preserved for winter use, and abundance of honey, seem to be the principal food of the inhabitants. One peasant told us that towards the close of the last century three bees had been sent from Moscow, and that from this small stock the whole country was now supplied with these useful little animals. They thrive well, from the number of flowers in that district, but at times the bears do great mischief to the hives. Beavers were formerly very common in this part of Siberia, but they have been gradually destroyed for their skins, till the race has become almost extinct. It is now one of the dearest sorts of fur, a collar of the best quality for a coat, one that has the silvery points to it, cannot be bought anywhere under two hundred roubles, and in fact a great part of those which are sold in Russia come by way of England from America. Many of the English merchants, at Petersburg, buy furs of all sorts at the Hudson's Bay Company's sales in London, and send them out to Kamtchatka to the Russian-American Company, who have the privilege of importing them duty free, and so send them back again to Petersburg; many, of course, are also smuggled in, but in either case the price is greatly increased.

Next morning brought us the intelligence that we might attempt to cross the Ulba in a canoe, but that we must leave the carriage behind us. As we were obliged to retrace our steps in a few days, this was not very material, and we got into a *teléga*, with our carpet bags, and went over fifteen versts of worse road, if possible, than before, but the difference of the vehicle

made the rate of travelling, at all events, more expeditious. One at a time we crossed the river, but it required the utmost caution to keep the canoe in equilibrium, the stream was so rapid, and the masses of ice so numerous. Our vessel was literally a large tree hollowed out, which was punted over between the pieces of ice, every one of which threatened to capsize us. The centre of the stream only was running water, the sides were already frozen up partially, so that it was no easy matter to land when we got across.

The fortress is well situated on an eminence, and is a tolerably strong place by art, as well as its natural position. It is surrounded on one side by the Altai mountains, here eighteen hundred feet high, over which lies the road to Buchtarminsk, and through which the Irtysch threads its rapid way to the point where it joins the Buchtarmà at the Chinese frontier. The town of Ust-Kamenogorsk, which is small, lies in the valley about three versts from the Ulba, although it is eleven hundred and fifty feet above the level of the Caspian Sea. The fortress contains some artillery and three or four hundred troops, with a population in the town of two thousand souls. Cochrane mentions that in his day it was commanded by a Frenchman who had been long enough in Siberia to forget his country, which he considers a singular circumstance. It once occurred to us to find a more strange phenomenon in the commandant of a fortress in Norway, who had been placed in that situation only a few years before by Bernadotte, and who had so far forgotten his mother tongue, without having learned much Norwegian, that we were never more astonished than when he informed

us he was a Frenchman. His French was hardly intelligible, and if we had not had his account of himself verified by others, we should not have been convinced of the correctness of his memory.

It would seem that Ust-Kamenogorsk is destined always to be given into the charge of a foreigner, for on this occasion we found its commandant a Colonel Macken, a Scotchman, by extraction, but born in Riga, where his parents were living some seventy years before. He too could not speak one word of English, but German tolerably fluently. Feelingly did he descant on the loneliness of his situation, as a prelude or excuse, perhaps, for a part of his biography, for which he had no other justification to offer. He had only lately, at the age of seventy, and he was an old man of his age, been married to a very pretty young woman of eighteen. The lady had been educated at the admirable institution of the *enfans trouvés* at Moscow, and her destination was, after her studies were completed, to act the part of *sage femme* at Ust-Kamenogorsk. She was, of course, well brought up, and has really very good manners, and we will hope that now, therefore, she will act the *femme sage*. She was considered a great acquisition to the society of Ust-Kamenogorsk, even to those who did not require her professional assistance. The Colonel came, saw, and was conquered, and without loss of time deprived the ladies of her services by making her his wife. We dined and spent an evening with the worthy veteran, who has a very good quarter, and his *ménage* gave us a favourable impression of his spouse's being a good house-wife, as well as mid-wife. We also passed an evening at the house

of a merchant, which was very well furnished and comfortable. He is a proprietor of silver mines in the neighbourhood, called Syrànofski, from the owner's name; the works were discontinued for the winter unluckily the very day we arrived, but we regretted it the less as we were going into the country of mines in a short time. Those of Riddersk are also not very far from hence.

The town of Buchtarminsk is distant about a hundred versts, and in good weather the journey may easily be performed in half a day, although through a very mountainous country; there are several redoubts of Cossacks on the road, and the usual plan is to return by water down the Irtysch, a distance of a hundred and fifty versts, and its rapid stream conveys you very pleasantly and expeditiously along. This was now, however, out of the question, although the road was a choice of evils only. In summer it must be beautiful, and has much to offer of interest to the naturalist and painter, who will find in this short space all possible varieties of hill and dale, mountain and water, cultivation and the wildest scenery. The fortress is placed at about a verst from the Irtysch on its right bank, and is really a romantic spot; on a considerably higher elevation than Ust-Kamenogorsk, the fall to that place being three hundred and seventy-four feet. Its population is only eight hundred, and the cold rarely reaches 25°. The only curiosity it has to boast is the mark of the feet of a man and horse imprinted in the hard granite, apparently formed when the rock was in a state of fusion. They are so placed, and at such a distance from each other, as to represent a man stand-

ing and holding a horse at arm's length, who might be supposed to be trying to break away from him. In a country so superstitious as this, it may readily be imagined that the most absurd traditions are extant as to its origin, which is probably the constant running of water over the stone, for it has evidently at some time or other lain in the bed of the river.

About a hundred versts from hence, at Narym, are the first Chinese outposts, called there Kock-tuba, or Khoui-mai-lakhu, north of the Zaizang lake; but the bold guardians of their country's frontier abandon their station at the approach of winter, and retire to the interior, so that we could not judge of their military appearance: it was described to us as a perfect burlesque on soldiery. The picquet is often changed, that the men may not become too intimately acquainted with the Russians. There are several places in this vicinity where the Russians wash the sands for gold, and have opened some silver mines. Formerly the Chinese and Kirghis interfered with their operations, but now they are come to a good understanding on the subject. The scenery all around is fine, and Cochrane is almost poetical in describing it; there is no doubt that a more eligible situation for settling a colony could not be selected, and it has also been mentioned as the entrepôt for the commerce with China, instead of Kiakhta. There would be water communication for the Chinese a part of the way by the river Narym, which falls into the Buchtarma and Irtysch, and in this way merchandise might be transported without difficulty to and from Tobolsk.

During the time we had lingered here, the Ulba

had settled down into a quiet stream again, and all the ice was carried away, so that we had no difficulty in crossing. We got back to the village where we had left the carriage, and found everything *in statu quo*, but the appearance of the roads was most unpromising, and we had to cross the Uba at a very different point from that where we had nearly fallen into the water during the night. We were anxious to reach it as soon as possible, for the ice was evidently on the increase, and it was very probable we might be obliged to wait a day or two in the carriage till there was a solid surface of ice to allow us to pass. The first thirty-five versts from the village, however, occupied us nine hours and a half: it was one constant ascent up slippery half-frozen hills, so that it was as much as eight horses could do to prevent our retrograding.

We arrived within a few versts of the river at night, and were therefore obliged to stop and sleep some hours at the post-house, as to pass it in darkness was wholly impracticable. In the morning, however, we succeeded, and a few hours later it would have been impossible. The stream was very broad and rapid, and the masses of ice succeeded each other so quickly, that nothing but the most solid raft and the aid of twenty men could have enabled us to cross it. We accomplished it, however, successfully, but found the snow on the other side very deep, and decided that at Zménogorsk, where we hoped to arrive that night, we must take off our wheels, and put the carriage on a sledge. We had another small stream to cross, which offered no great difficulty; but the snow during the whole of the last relay to Zménogorsk was up to the

axle-trees, and we were six hours in doing nineteen versts. We were to stay some days to see the mines, and visit some *fabriques* in the neighbourhood, so that we had ample time to have everything put in order for our winter campaign.

Zménogorsk, or the Snake Mountain, is the residence of the superintendent of the silver-mines, which form part of the *apanage* of the Emperor. It is a village situated in the heart of the mines, and represents, in regard to the private domains of the Crown, what Barnaoul is to the public treasury. Colonel Ostermayer, the director of the works, received us with the greatest hospitality, and we had only to regret that, although a German by birth, he did not speak one word of anything but Russian, which prevented our profiting as much as we should otherwise have done by his explanation of the different processes of extracting the silver ore. The village is embedded, as it were, in an old mine, and probably in former times the site which it now occupies underwent the same process as we saw going through in the mountains adjacent.

Before descending into the subterranean caverns, we put on a mining dress, and were furnished each with a lamp to guide us through the long galleries. After descending by a staircase upwards of fifty fathoms deep, we came to a gallery a hundred and fifty fathoms long, at the end of which was a water-wheel forty-two feet in diameter, which brought up the ore by a perpendicular shaft which commuicated with the apex of the mountains. This wheel is named the *préobraschenska*, and the water which supplies it is brought by two

canals underground, one, two hundred and forty-one fathoms long, and another, one hundred and thirty fathoms. These communicate, by another, sixty fathoms long, with a smaller wheel, called *Ekaterinskaia.* A third wheel is also turned by these streams before it reaches the elephant machine, as it is called, so that four wheels are kept in motion by the same water from the rivulet Zmenofska. Further on, galleries were cut in every direction, leading to other shafts which had ceased to be worked. Granite and porphyry are the component strata, and the water streamed from the walls, although the temperature below is always at about 8°. The difference in approaching the outer air was very sensible, for though the weather was beautifully clear, it froze hard, and the sun, though bright and cheerful, had but little influence on the general temperature.

When we came up, we saw some convicts in irons at work on the solid rock above, but it was so hard, that the small quantities of ore which could be extracted in that manner, must be too inconsiderable to be taken into the account. We believe it is a unique instance of finding silver in strata of porphyry. We naturally supposed these wretches were Russian prisoners come to terminate their miserable existence in these mines; but upon inquiry, we found they were criminals from the neighbourhood, sentenced for minor offences to a few days' hard labour, as our vagabonds are to the tread-mill.

The granite and porphyry which we saw in the living rock, undergoes six processes before the silver is extracted from it; and the expense is so great, that

there are very few private individuals who think it worth while to incur it. It is only in the case of the Crown, who employs its own peasants, and who are paid under any circumstances, that the profit is equivalent to the expense, unless by some accident a vein is found, which is more than usually rich, or can be worked at less than the ordinary outlay. The first process is the explosion from the rock, which is done by blasting. The second is the breaking it up into small pieces with hammers, just as we see the granite prepared for the macadamized roads with us. The third is powdering it fine by large hammers, which are worked by machinery. The fourth is putting the stone so pounded into furnaces in which the metallic particles are separated from the dross; this is done in immense smelting-houses, where a current of air is brought in from openings above to act the part of bellows, and create a draught in the furnace below, from whence the substance is poured out, cleared of its baser parts, but apparently not much more purified then when it was put in. The fifth process takes place in another furnace, where all the metallic particles, except the silver, are cleared away. In the sixth and last, this is put into what the Germans call a *treibofen*, or doubly-heated refining furnace, together with wedges of lead, which, in melting, draw off with them any remaining drossy particles which have escaped in the previous process, and the silver being the heavier metal, sinks to the bottom of these tremendous furnaces, where it is left till it is cold. In this state it is forwarded to the mint at Petersburg, where a further process of refining takes place, to

separate from it the particles of gold, which are always found with silver in greater or lesser quantities.

These mines have been worked above a century, and are almost exhausted: they only produce one *zolotnik* and a half of silver in every hundred pud of stone. A *zolotnik* is the ninety-sixth part of a pound. These Crown peasants receive two roubles a month, and twelve pounds of flour, whether employed in the mines or not; but the expense of production is usually calculated at an additional half *zolotnik* the hundred pud, so that the gain to the Crown is very trifling. There are silver mines which produce four or five *zolotniks* to every hundred pud; but even then the profit is insufficient to private speculators, because the workmen are paid at a very high rate. The labour here is by no means excessive; the works are going on night and day, but three sets of workmen are employed, who relieve each other every eight hours, so that no one works above eight hours in the twenty-four. The net produce is about two hundred puds per annum, and the clear profit on the pud is calculated here only at three thousand roubles; the whole return would therefore only be six hundred thousand roubles, or not thirty thousand pounds a year. The Crown peasants have, in addition to their two roubles and twelve pounds of flour monthly, their lands and houses rent free, and enjoy also a variety of privileges which make their condition far superior to that of ordinary serfs.

It may be as well here to correct the statement of Captain Jesse, that he had from the best authority the estimate of Russian serfs placed at forty-five millions. The whole population of the empire is about sixty

millions, including all the Nomadic tribes and the two Siberias, of whom *none* are serfs. The Crown peasants, as accurately stated in an article in the *Quarterly Review* for the month of March, in 1841, and which we subsequently verified at St. Petersburg, are twenty-two millions; then there are the nobles and priests, a pretty numerous class, and the military. How then, in Captain Jesse's sense, can there be forty-five millions of serfs, for he means by that slaves, as he says, and the Crown peasants certainly are not so. His informant, doubtless, included in the number the Crown peasants, all in short who are not noble; but he could not mean to tell Captain Jesse there are forty-five millions of slaves*. He says too, that a Russian in speaking to a foreigner, gives them the mild name of peasants, which they do not adopt themselves, and implies that they call them slaves. Now, he knows sufficient of the Russian language to be well aware that in speaking Russian among themselves, they neither use the one term nor the other, but call them *duches* or souls simply.

These mines have produced altogether, since they have been Crown property, rather more than a century, nearly a century and a half, fifty-five thousand puds of silver, and seventeen hundred puds of gold, besides lead and other minerals of more or less value. The establishment is on an immense scale, and gives in the laboratory part of it constant employment to three hundred workmen: it appears managed with the most perfect regularity. The village is prettily situated, and the effect on emerging from the subterranean caverns

* Bremner calls them twenty-one millions, and is not far from the mark.

to the light of day, highly picturesque. We had 20° of cold, with a clear blue sky and bright sun; and the whiteness of the driven snow on the irregularly shaped housetops, scattered about without order, as the excavations made room for them, gave a colouring to the *tableau* quite novel to European eyes. There is here a very good museum, and an elementary school containing eighty or ninety boys, where the rudiments of grammar, reading, writing, and arithmetic, are taught.

On the 20th, we made an excursion to Kolyvàn, a distance of thirty-two versts, where there is a government *fabrique* for working ornamental vases, columns, and other objects of art. It is situated on the river Belaya, in the very centre of the Altai, and is surrounded with almost all the different sorts of stones which Siberia contains. Immense blocks of porphyry, agate, jasper, various kinds of fine-grained granite and marble, are here collected to be prepared for the palaces at Petersburg and elsewhere. The mountains immediately adjacent to the lake of Kolyvàn are composed of granite formed in horizontal strata, but at some distance from it the porphyry has burst its way through the granite, and lies above it with layers of porphyry, slate, and jasper. The greatest curiosity here, is an enormous vase of green porphyry, making for the Emperor, and indeed finished, excepting the polishing, which, from the hardness of the material, is a long and laborious operation. It is sixteen feet long, ten feet wide, eight feet high, and weighs thirty thousand pounds. The form is elegant, an oval raised on a handsomely carved pedestal, the workmanship very good, and being susceptible of a high polish, it will,

when completed, have a superb effect. The expense of transport to Petersburg, will be something immense, though it will go the greater part of the way by water. It had been already five years in hand, and would require at least two more before it reaches its destination.

The establishment employs three hundred workmen, and is directed by a German officer, with the rank of colonel—a most agreeable, well-informed person, with whom we dined, and who was delighted at receiving a visit from strangers. He described his residence as dullness personified. He has but four persons with whom he can converse at all, and a traveller is a most welcome and rare occurrence. He told us that the neighbouring mountains offered the richest field to the naturalist, in every way, of any part of the Altai, and that the scenery in summer is superb as we could imagine. The cold is not extreme, rarely exceeding 20°, from it being so completely sheltered by the mountains; and the heat in summer by day considerable: in spite of which, few plants and vegetables come to maturity, owing to the coldness of the nights, which is such as to oblige them to have fires in the evening all the year round, except the month of July.

We made our first journey *en traineau* here, and bad enough it was in that way—on wheels it would have been impossible. The road was very mountainous, and lay through forests for eight or ten versts together, where the snow was drifted to the height of many feet, through which we had to force our way, it not being yet sufficiently hard to resist the horses' feet. In the

rapid descents, we constantly rolled over and over; and three horses to a light *traineau* had the greatest difficulty in getting up the long steep hills of snow, where there were no solid footing for them. What we should have done with our carriage on such roads we know not; and we had still a long journey before us, before we should come to any town where we could leave it till our return from the far East, and to take it on the whole way was out of the question. The next day, a council of war was held, when it was decided we should go on to Barnaoul on wheels, a distance of two hundred and eighty versts: but the road was represented as good, and we were told we should not find much snow, it being mostly over a dead flat. Accordingly, the carriage was fortified with very strong ashen shafts, which were fixed all round it, so as to force a passage through the snow in case of need—and thus we started for Barnaoul. Bad as our journey had been for some time past, it was evident we had not reached the maximum, and that every day the roads would be worse, till the snow had settled down into solidity, which, in parts where there is little communication, requires some time. We had generally ten or twelve horses, the whole of this journey, and did not, withal, average above five versts an hour.

Our first stage was mountainous; but after that the Steppes began again, with driving snow and wind, almost amounting to what is called in this country a *burán*, or whirlwind, which is often fatal to travellers, if accompanied with snow in any quantity. Having tried the effects of fire, water, and air, under their

most fearful forms, we are inclined to give the pre-eminence in point of horror to the latter. A *burán* which overtakes you in a forest is less formidable, because you cannot well get out of the right track, and the only danger is being buried alive in the snow. But in an open Steppes country, when it is very violent, the snow which is falling becomes whirled round, and mixed with that which the wind raises from the ground; so that, in broad daylight, the driver cannot see an inch before him, and does not know whether he is going to the right or the left. Many fatal accidents occur in this way—carriages being rolled down precipices, or men and horses frozen to death in the drifted snow, which naturally collects round the only object which interrupts its course for miles and miles.

After thirty-six hours of most disagreeable travelling, we arrived safely at Barnaoul, one of the most important towns in this division of Siberia, and were glad enough to get into a comfortable quarter, though not a brilliant one. The cold had become pretty severe, and there were all the indications of a heavy fall of snow, which, indeed, always occurs at this season, and generally lasts a fortnight, after which nothing more falls again for many months.

The environs of Barnaoul are highly cultivated, the quantity of corn necessary to supply it and the other *fabriques* in the vicinity being very great. Within a few versts of the town, we passed through some immense forests, which are, however, becoming every day rarer, from the immense quantities of wood required for the furnaces; eighty thousand cubic

fathoms are burned in a year. As we neared it, villages and inclosures made an agreeable change in the prospect. A long and steep hill leads down into the town, which is only three hundred and sixty-six feet above the level of the Caspian. It is situated on the Ob', and a bridge is crossed where the little river Barnaoul forms the junction with the parent stream. The town is three versts long, and in the narrowest part one wide. The spot on which it stands has probably been excavated at some period, it being so much lower than the level of the surrounding country, which seems quite mountainous from the valley below. The population increases, and is now about twelve thousand; the traffic is considerable, from its being the depôt of all the gold which is found in Siberia, east of the Ural.

In one of the squares is a fine granite pillar, seventy feet high, to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the establishment of the mining works; it was erected in 1825. The governor of Tomsk, who is *ex officio* the *chef* of the mining department, and usually a general of engineers, resides here during the summer months, and the society numbers among its members more persons of literary acquirements, than all the rest of Siberia put together.

In the neighbourhood are a great number of silver mines, like those of Zménogorsk, crown property, the produce of which are sent to Barnaoul for smelting, generally into bars of one hundred pud each. Five hundred men are employed in the laboratory, which is a quarter of a verst square. The oldest smelting-house is fifty fathoms long, and a newer one sixty-four. They are very wide, and have several tiers of furnaces,

which are supplied by a staircase behind, and the bellows belonging to them are of the most gigantic dimensions. The annual produce is about two hundred and fifty puds of silver, and about a million of other metals, lead, copper, and iron. The proportion of gold extracted from the silver in the mint at Petersburg is about twenty-five pounds to a thousand puds of silver. There are a hundred and fifteen smelting ovens in all, twelve large open hearths, twelve refining furnaces, five furnaces for cleaning the copper, and fourteen calcining ovens. Two hundred and sixty thousand measures of coal, each containing twenty puds, and four hundred thousand puds more, as dissolvents for the great refining furnace, are annually consumed. Many million puds of material are brought here, to produce the quantity of metal, which goes through pretty much the same process as we described at Zménogorsk; but here, of course, all is on a much larger scale.

The population of the whole government is little less than a hundred thousand, of whom one-half are employed in transporting the material, the ore, and the metals after they are worked, to the different points from whence they are shipped all over the empire. The price is low for this labour, twelve or thirteen copéks the pud, but at that rate even, they calculate sixty-five thousand roubles yearly are expended on it. In this way every one is employed, so that no part of Siberia is in so flourishing a condition as this government. In addition to this the salaries of the officers of the establishment, which form a large sum, are all expended here, and the largesses which are notoriously given to the

chefs of the departments are in part, also, spent here, so that the sum of money annually put into circulation must be very considerable.

There is also a large paper-manufactory, a glass-manufactory, and one for making ticking, on a great scale. But the great source of the riches of Barnaoul is, that all the gold from the Altai and East Siberia is brought here to one focus. The process of melting it into ingots preparatory to its being sent to the mint at Petersburg, is simple enough. Each proprietor brings his gold in bags sealed up, all mixed together indiscriminately, dust, small pieces, and sometimes masses weighing several pounds. These are put into the scales in the presence of the *chef* of the establishment and the proprietor, and then the contents are poured into large iron pots with a slight mixture of clay in them, made red-hot, previously, in the furnace. These are then put again into the furnace, which has been heated to the *ne plus ultra*, for forty minutes, at the expiration of which time the gold is in a liquid state, and is poured into large quadrangular iron recipients, which contain a pud, if there is enough of gold belonging to one person. These are again weighed to see what is lost by the process of passing through the fire, and then the gold is tried and its value fixed according to the carat. The average loss in the melting is one and a-half per cent., but it is, occasionally, as much as two or three per cent. We had some of the bars in our hands of fifty thousand roubles value, as soon as they were taken out of the pots, and a tempting sight it was to see the valuable metal within one's grasp.

The large proprietors of gold mines make immense

presents, annually, to the officers employed in this service, and the *chef* of the whole establishment often makes a very large fortune in a few years by this means. As it depends on him to fix the value of the gold, according to the quality, it is a matter of vital importance to the proprietor to be on good terms with him, and we have seen the greatest court paid to individuals on whose report so much depends. It is said that there are persons much higher in authority than even he is, who have their share of these largesses, and if the system is so corrupt throughout, the revenue must lose considerably. It stands to reason that large sums cannot be expended every year in presents to governors and others, unless the gold is rated higher than its real worth, for otherwise there would be no object to gain, and it would be all dead loss. But where no one is allowed to get rid of his gold but through this channel, the temptation to fraud is great, and smuggling even goes on at Barnaoul. Gold is frequently bought for something under the price the government allows, by other proprietors who have a quantity to send to head-quarters. The smaller proprietor saves by this means the expense of carriage and presents to the different officers, and so it comes to pretty much the same to them; perhaps, too, they have never had legal permission to search for it. Before this can be done, application must be made to government for a grant of the land on which it is proposed to work, and this is attended with some little expense, which he escapes by disposing of the gold surreptitiously to those who have authority to search for it.

When once the gold is weighed and valued, the proprietor has no further expense, the government takes upon itself the conveying it to Petersburg, whither it is sent three times in the winter and coined, fifteen per cent. being the tax which the Emperor receives for the cost of transport and coinage. The value of the gold is about fifty thousand roubles the pud, and they generally calculate that the proprietor receives about thirty-seven thousand, the tax to government, and the presents, being deducted. The average expense of washing in a pretty good vein is twelve thousand roubles the pud, so that the net profit is twenty-five thousand roubles the pud. This is, of course, a calculation which holds good only where the parties are successful in the outset; great numbers are ruined without ever finding anything, and it is impossible to make any general calculation. Those who have been eminently fortunate, have admitted to us that there is very little *sçavoir faire* required, luck is all—one man will expend a fortune on ground which to all appearance is most likely to contain gold without finding any, while another tumbles on a rich vein in the first spade-full of sand he turns. The silver ore is considerably richer here than at Zménogorsk—some of the stone produces four and even as much as eight *zolotnik* to the hundred pud. Still private individuals do not, in general, consider it a good speculation. There is much more risk attending the search for gold, where the whole outlay is so often thrown away, but if it does succeed, the expense of washing the sand is less, than that of the numerous processes of extracting the silver, and the profit vastly greater.

There is an exceedingly good school of cadets here, where mathematics, drawing, and the different branches of an engineer's duties are taught. The Mineralogical Museum is first-rate, and the collection of stuffed birds and animals as well as the collection of costumes of the Kamtchadales and other northern tribes, is one of the best in the empire. It is almost a pity it should not be sent to Moscow or Petersburg, where it would be more appreciated. The object which principally attracted our attention among the stuffed animals, was a tiger which was killed the year before between Barnaoul and Biisk, about fifty versts from the former, in latitude 52° 10′. Some peasants found it in a marsh, and unfortunately taking it for a wolf, attacked it with sticks; he killed two of them before he was shot by some sportsmen who came to their assistance. It is lower in stature than the royal tiger, has a short neck and a long body, and is of a speckled light yellow colour, had probably diminished in bulk from the change of climate, and was out of condition. From what a distance must this animal have wandered, and what could have been its object in such an expedition? Humboldt mentions them as being common in the neighbourhood of the Caspian, near the Aral lake, but even that is a long way off; this wanderer may perhaps have passed the Himmelaya, and stayed all winter to the north of them. The last that is recorded to have been seen in Siberia, before this one, was killed on the Léna in 1828, consequently, in a place whose temperature was much lower than that of Petersburg. Mr. Levschine describes one called the *báhr*, which we imagine to be the same species as this one at Barnaoul,

found in the reeds of the Aral and Sir-Daraya. It is clear, therefore, that the inhabitants of the torrid zone can exist in the very opposite extreme.

We found many more persons at Barnaoul who could speak French and German than in any other town in Siberia; there is also a German church and school established here. There happened, too, to be some officers belonging to the *Jardin des Plantes* of Petersburg, who had been botanizing during the summer in the neighbourhood, who were waiting to return with the convoy who escorted the gold to Petersburg, which was to start the end of December. Before we went on to East Siberia, we were anxious to see the eastern part of the Altai, the country inhabited by the Kalmucks, and Kusnetski, a Tatar race, so called from their being employed in the iron foundries which abound in that district. *Kusnetz* signifies a smith in Russian. We deemed, from our late experience, that it would be better to take a carriage of the country, and leave our own at Barnaoul, as we must return there, and lucky it was for us that we did so. At first we hardly found snow enough for the *traineau* to slip comfortably, owing to the storms of wind which had drifted it off the roads. The post-houses where we stopped were miserable-looking, and there was by no means that appearance of comfort we were used to see. By degrees the roads improved, at least the snow increased, but a hundred and eighty versts which we had to go to the town of Biisk occupied us twenty-five hours. The last stage before you arrive there, the fine chain of the Altai mountains bursts upon you, and the view in summer must be magnificent. You descend a steep

mountain into the valley in which the fortress stands, well situated between two ridges of the mountains, here five thousand feet above the level of the Caspian.

Biisk is a large village, containing about two thousand inhabitants, and stands on the river Bi, at its confluence with the Katunga, in the middle of a natural amphitheatre formed by the Altai. Between the village and the mountain background is a fine forest, which has a superb appearance from the elevated ground on the opposite side, by which the valley is entered. There is some artillery in the fortress, but of what possible use it can be, except to be transported to some other place, we are at a loss to imagine. The greater part of a day was spent here, though there was nothing of particular interest, and it snowed so hard that there was no getting out of the house, and it blew a gale of wind: an agreeable prospect for us, with two hundred and twenty-five versts to do through a country little frequented, and where the *gites* were not likely to be of a superior description. The longer we delayed the worse it would be for us, and in fact at every relay the accounts were more unfavourable than the last. Drifting, unfrozen snow made the roads almost impassable, and we were every now and then cheered with the information that it sometimes happens that the post is stopped for a whole week, while the snow is being cut out.

Bad as the weather was, sometimes almost a *burán*, it was not cold; we were often sheltered by the forests, one of which, near Kusnetsk, is fifty versts in width, and very hilly. At the post-house in the middle of the forest we thought we must have stopped for a

night at least—neither horses nor men much liked facing the inclemency of the weather; but we persevered, and next morning, as we approached Kusnetsk, it was clear and bright. The position of this fortress is the finest we saw on the whole tour, and might be made, if necessary, exceedingly strong. It is placed on the top of a high rock, from which it commands and protects the village in the plain below. There is a fine piece of water in the valley, which is encircled by the Altai at a very short distance off; this chain does not rise here to anything like the height it does at Biisk. The Kalmucks inhabit it to the number of forty thousand, many of whom we met in the shops, and were surprised to see such good-looking people compared to the Kirghis and Tatar countenances we had been so long used to. They bring a variety of furs into the market here, and pay a tribute to both the Russian and Chinese empires, the only tribe who offer allegiance to the two nations. The village is pretty enough, and really contains much better shops than one could have any idea of in such an out-of-the-way place. It has also a curious old church, one of the most ancient in Siberia. We stayed here twenty-four hours, and then returned to Barnaoul direct; our road was the same as we had come the first four stages, and we did not find it improved.

The long relay through the forest, twenty-eight versts, occupied us eleven hours in accomplishing, the snow had drifted to such an height; but as we got towards Barnaoul the weather had changed, and the sledging became very good. We had been thirty-nine hours in doing the two hundred and twenty-five versts,

from Biisk to Kusnetsk, but from thence to Barnaoul, only two hundred and fifty, we were forty-eight hours. We got back about the middle of the day, the 31st of October, with a bright sun and clear sky, and the thermometer at 25° below zero of Réaumur. The weather-wise told us we must not calculate on having a continuance of fine weather—the usual quantity of snow had not yet fallen, and this was the proper season for it to come down. We remained there till the morning of the $\frac{2}{14}$th of November, when we made another start for Tomsk with every indication of an approaching *burán*.

When we got about half way, the symptoms were no longer equivocal—we were fairly stopped by the storm, or, as they call it here when very violent, the *purga*, a name by no means inappropriate, for it seems as if the same wind blew from one hemisphere to the other, and thoroughly cleared away everything that crossed its path. We had changed horses about four o'clock in the afternoon, at a small village, just as it was getting dusk, and had proceeded about a verst on our road, when the hurricane of snow was so tremendous that our drivers lost themselves completely, and literally did not know whether they were going to their right hand or left. It was fortunate we were so near the village; there was nothing for it but trying to find our way back to it, which we succeeded in at last, but were a whole hour in doing the single verst backwards and forwards. The storm increased in intensity as the night came on, and we thought ourselves exceedingly lucky in being well housed.

We were detained fifteen hours, when, the wind

having in a great degree subsided, we proceeded on our way. The snow was very deep, but the weather fine and not very cold. We had from twelve to sixteen horses to the carriage all the way, in spite of which we did not reach Tomsk till very late the night of the 5th, and the whole distance from Barnaoul was little more than four hundred versts. As we approached the town, there were evident marks of improvement in the cultivation of the lands, and inclosures became frequent. The forests were partially cleared away, and here and there small clumps of fine pine trees left to break the currents of wind which sweep over the giant plains.

Tomsk is situated on the river Tom, at no great distance from the point where it joins Katunga. The confluence of these two rivers forms the great Ob', which, as we have before remarked, after pouring itself into a gulph of the same name at a considerable distance to the north of Tobolsk, ultimately mixes its waters with those of the Frozen Ocean. The cold had now become intense, and on the night of our arrival the thermometer stood at 27°. We arrived late, and got into an indifferent quarter, which was not altogether free from draughts; it was but temporary, however, for the following day, after we had paid a visit to the Governor, General Beger, we were better lodged than we had yet been in any part of our journey. It was well indeed for us, for that day the spirit thermometer marked 35°, the coldest day but one at Tomsk in the whole year. There was a bright blue sky and clear sunshine notwithstanding, and it was by no means intolerably cold on foot, though in the morning, as we drove down to the Governor's in an open

sledge, the nose and ears required constant friction to keep them from freezing. Tomsk has in a few years risen considerably in importance, and its population increased to the number of twelve thousand, about the same as that of Barnaoul. It possesses several tanneries and cotton-stuff manufactories, managed by the so-called Tatars; but from being a sort of half-way house for all the tea and other merchandise which is sent from Kiakhta to the fair of Irbit, and Moscow, as well as the point through which everything that comes and goes to Kamtchatka and the northern parts of Siberia must pass, there is a vast deal of movement in it, and often a great quantity of goods deposited in the magazine appropriated to that purpose. The city is well and regularly built, the streets wide, and many of the houses of the rich merchants are of brick, stuccoed over. Excepting as a safeguard against fire, we infinitely prefer one of wood; the one we occupied of that sort was as comfortably fitted up as any one could desire, and we thought much warmer than the Governor's, though his is in every way a much better house, and built of less combustible materials.

The society is numerous, and on an easy agreeable footing. The Governor's lady receives one night in the week. There is a very good club, where the men meet three nights in the week to play at cards and billiards; and on Sundays there is a ball there, when they generally muster a hundred. We were very much surprised at the toilette of the ladies, which was always elegant and often very handsome. We never saw any young persons at a ball who would not have been perfectly presentable in either of their metro-

polises, which are celebrated for the magnificence and costliness of the ladies' dresses. We were present at nine or ten during our stay there. Few towns of this size can boast so many wealthy inhabitants as Tomsk; several are cited as *millionaires*, and many others are extremely well off. These *richards* are proprietors of gold-mines, who make Tomsk their winter residence, it being the nearest town to the places where the *usines* are established. Besides these, there are the parties who have the contract with Government for the distillation of spirits—a most lucrative speculation; and several persons even have come here from Petersburg and Moscow to establish themselves, for the convenience of its contiguity to the rivers in whose sands the gold is found, with a view to pursuing that alluring occupation. The President of the Government, the law officers of the Crown, the *maitre de police*—a high functionary—and many other subordinate civil servants who wear the imperial uniform, form a numerous society, who meet at each other's houses to play whist and boston every night, after which they sup, and generally separate before midnight. All the world, male and female, play, but the points are in general very low, and the richer the parties the less they were inclined to increase their stakes in general, we observed.

Every day we were not otherwise engaged, during our rather long stay here, we dined with the Governor, and more complete hospitality, in the fullest sense of the word, could not be found anywhere. We would humbly ask the detractors from Russian hospitality whether it is a usual circumstance in England for a stranger, and a foreigner too, to be received at dinner

every day for a month as one of the family, *sans ceremonie*, by any of their acquaintance? if so, their acquaintance differs from ours. We need not mention Tomsk as a solitary instance of this, for we found it the same throughout the empire; and in three months we spent at Moscow we need never have dined at our own expense. Captain Jesse says, when they do show hospitality, it is not from a kind feeling. Can anything be more indecent than such an imputation? We would beg to ask in what country a man who knows nobody is fêted? We have not yet met with it, and it is certainly not so in England.

General Beger, the Governor, is an officer of the mining corps, of German origin, but has forgotten his paternal language; his lady is pure German, however, as well as an adopted daughter, married to a Captain Meidel, an aide-de-camp of our friend Baron Howen, also a Courlander. They happened to be here, so that we had plenty of means of conversation, without putting our little stock of Russian into requisition at his table. There are two or three persons in Tomsk also who speak French. The military are less numerous here than in any society we have been thrown into in Russia, and they do not, as is usual, monopolize all the consideration. Excepting the Governor, there is not a single General, nor any body of very high rank, which gives an ease to the tone of society which cannot exist where the strictest etiquette is enforced, even to the buttons on the uniform. No military man is allowed to wear plain clothes till he has crossed the frontier of the empire. At the Governor's, when there was merely the family, the officers of the party were always in

undress, as well as himself. Personally to ourselves nothing could exceed his kindness, not only in making it a reproach if ever we omitted to dine with him, but in offering his carriage, and all the little civilities which distinguish true hospitality from the cold formalities which a letter of introduction in some measure exacts. But we repeat again, that, whether at Moscow, at Nijni, or in Siberia, we always met with the same kindness on every occasion; and we believe that those travellers who do not find themselves treated in a similar manner have nobody but themselves to thank for it.

We may safely appeal to Count Woronzow's numerous friends in England, whether he is not likely to make an Englishman's residence at Odessa agreeable to him, unless he is determined not to be pleased with anything beforehand. To such we say, unless you come expressly to seek materials for an ill-natured book, why stay there? Captain Jesse appears to belong to the unfortunate class of travellers whom nothing pleases. The Batavier, generally considered an excellent steamer, is the worst tub he ever was tossed in: if he does not like the smell of bilge water, he must confine himself to travelling on *terra firma*. Rare, as he says it is, to meet with hospitality, he appears to take delight in criticising those people, *par excellence*, from whom he admits to have received it. Books of this description are the most likely things in the world to make their statements verified in the case of future travellers, at all events. But, even if there is no hidden cause why the traveller should see things in Russia under an unfavourable light, if his vanity has

not been wounded by neglect, or his unwillingness to conform himself to the habits and customs of the country have not excluded him from anything more than the outside forms of acquaintance with the inhabitants—on which account he decides for all the rest of the world that no intimacy can be formed between an Englishman and a Russian—still, his ignorance of the language, and limited means of judging whether the authority of those to whom he applies for information, on matters of which he admits his ignorance, is worthy of being quoted, should make him hesitate a little in expressing a positive opinion. Where facts are concerned, mis-statements are more inexcusable; but then *one* reader in a thousand only can judge whether the facts are true, so *that* is immaterial, and the pages are filled.

In a work of considerable merit, by Mr. Bremner, repeated arguments are founded on facts which never occurred. We will mention but *one* example, which occurs to us at the moment—but there are many such. To prove the evil of despotism, he says that, under that form of government, it is dangerous for a man to be eminent even for his numerous virtues, and instances the Prince Dmitri Golitzin, who, he asserts, has been dismissed from the government of Moscow after having enjoyed the highest favour for many years, because he was too kind-hearted to denounce the numerous conspiracies, existing only in the writer's imagination, but which he says are disseminated through the whole empire. "But," he asks, energetically, "will his disgrace arrest the tide of liberal opinions?' It will but be the signal for

increased activity and increased caution throughout all the wide ramifications of the secret societies, which, in defiance of the exertions made to put them down, exist in every part of the empire." After so positive a statement, our readers will be surprised to learn, that Prince Golitzin never did fall into disgrace —has never ceased to be governor of Moscow—is so still—and, at the marriage of the Grand Duke Césarévich, in 1841, *alone received* the title of "Highness," which not above half-a-dozen Russian subjects enjoy. Perhaps—we only say perhaps—Mr. Bremner's deductions might be just, if the fact were true: but *cadit quæstio*, as we used to say in the schools.

Without making it our business to correct the faults in other travellers' books, we will fearlessly assert, that the unfavourable impression against Russia, in this country, would be in a great measure removed, if any competent person would act the part of censor, and only expunge from the books written on Russia during the last ten years the falsehoods which teem in them. Where matters of opinion are concerned, or personal views recorded, we will allow anything to pass muster; but stubborn things, called facts, *should* be true. We have only taken the liberty of making observations on contemporaneous writers, to prove, that two persons may travel about the same time in the same countries, and come away with very different impressions. We have so often observed, that when writers state they have seen certain things with their own eyes, we have no great difficulty in believing them, because we have witnessed something like them ourselves; but when something marvellous is recorded from hearsay, with

no authority given, it generally happens that it is strictly after Paley's definition, contrary to experience; because, when we were in a situation to have seen and known it, if it had occurred, we did not see it. General observations, such as the following, we consider refute themselves. "All who have studied the character of the Emperor, agree in asserting, that he aims at nothing short of universal conquest." We wonder any man of common sense could pen such a sentence; because there is, perhaps, no one subject on which writers differ so much as in their estimate of the Emperor's character; yet none that we have ever read (we do not include English newspapers) ascribe to him so insane a project as the one just put forth. Why not be a little moderate? say—as one writer does—that he aims at the conquest of India, or—as another—at that of Norway and Sweden, or—as a third—of Greece, Egypt, and Constantinople? but really universal conquest is too sweeping a stroke even for an Emperor of Russia. What will they not attribute to the future Czar, whose name is Alexander? With such an ominous resemblance to the conqueror of old, *one world* will not satisfy his ambition.

We are inclined to think, that, if newspapers sprung up in Russia as rapidly as they do in France and England, and that there was the same license of the press, the Emperor would be a gainer by it. As nothing scarcely is now published there, except under the authority of government, the most trifling event is swelled into importance, and everything that occurs has a variety of groundless causes attributed to it in foreign publications, simply because they are not men-

tioned at all in Russian ones. For example, if there were a *Morning Post* at St. Petersburg, it would have been mentioned three years ago that Count Woronzow was gone to England to visit his sister, and no further notice would have been taken of the circumstance. But, for want of the "*vate sacro*" to record this natural matter of fact, an English writer finds out, some time afterwards, that he, too, has fallen into disgrace as well as Prince Golitzin, because he is so liberal as not to take the emoluments of his office, but gives them to the subordinates in his *chançellerie*—and that the Emperor, to show his displeasure at such an act of generosity, has banished him, poor man! to England. The same writer found out, when our lamented friend, Prince Butera, married his amiable widow, that the Emperor consented only on condition of his residing in Russia,—the fact being, that he only did so after he was appointed minister at that court. But we were frequently struck with the total indifference that Russians have, even in the interior, where news do not travel quickly, or arrive constantly, about reading newspapers. We were infinitely more anxious in Siberia to decipher the English news in the Russian papers, than those who took them in were to learn what concerned themselves. They were generally contented when they had read the gazette which contained the civil and military promotions: if they read anything further, it was more for the sake of killing time than anything else.

CHAPTER VII.

Mr. Astaschéf.—Process of searching for Gold.—Quantity found since 1829.—Dangerous and Expensive Speculation.—Mode of Working it.—Sent to Barnaoul, and thence to Petersburg.—Value.—Net Profit.—Advantage to Russia.—State of the Exiles at Tomsk.—None in Siberia in the Mines for Political Offences.—Government of Tomsk, area of.—Meteorological Observations.—Crawley, the Albino.—Superstitions of Tatars here.—Improvement in Town of Tomsk.—Great Fire.—Longevity.—Mr. de Hedenström.—Road to Irkutsk.—Krasnoyésk.—Valley of Yénisséi.—Fertility.—Rivers of Eastern Siberia.—Angará and Yénisséi.—Government of Irkutsk.

Among those inhabitants of Tomsk, whose speculations in the search for gold have been the most successful, and who have made a very rapid fortune, is a Mr. Astaschéf. His success shows, what daily experience confirms, that good fortune, after all, is the one thing needful in order to get on in the world; and that only a few, out of the many, possessed of equal talents and industry, for want of a favourable opportunity, or what is called a piece of luck to give them a good start, arrive at eminence in any pursuit to which they may happen to have dedicated themselves. About ten years ago this gentleman retired from the service of government, having been employed in the *bureau* of the minister of finance, with the nominal rank of colonel, and without a *sous*. His occupations in the office to which he belonged, probably had made him acquainted with the real state of the mining establishments in Siberia, more than the public in general can be, and especially of that department which relates to

the gold and silver. Tempted by the success which he was well aware attended some individuals, and ignorant, perhaps, how few prizes there are comparatively in that lottery, he determined on retiring from the service, in order to pursue this enticing *métier*.

No person in the employ of government is allowed directly, or indirectly, to be concerned in the business of working the sands for gold, a regulation most proper and wholesome in Russia, where gentlemen in office have such powers of undue influence, and where it could be so successfully and unjustly employed as in the case in question. Every free man, on the contrary, is allowed the privilege of endeavouring to ruin or make himself in this enterprise, without any difficulty or impediment. The losses, however, to individuals, have been often so great, that it is said the government have it in contemplation to impose some salutary check on the facility of embarking in the hazardous speculation. The profit is, doubtless, great to the revenue as well as individuals, when it is attended with success; but as that is the exception, and not the rule, the evils occasioned by failure are so great, and the ruin to families so terrible, that it may be doubted if the community at large be gainers by it or not. As soon as any one has investigated the district where he purposes to make the search, and has satisfied himself that appearances are favourable, from finding, perhaps, a few grains of the precious metal, he is obliged to announce the discovery to the nearest public functionary. The next step is to make application to the director of the nearest mining department belonging to the Crown, for leave to begin his undertaking. An

officer of the mines upon this is sent to measure out the ground, which is limited by law to five square versts. This is assigned to the person in question for as long a time as he chooses to occupy it, during which period he is, to all intents and purposes, the proprietor, and pays no rent to government. When all the arrangements are made, the speculator proceeds to erect huts for the workmen, and his machines for the washing of the sand. The only condition annexed, as we have before stated, is, that whatever gold he finds, must be immediately conveyed, after the season of work is over (the beginning of October) to the government depôt at Barnaoul. The subsequent processes we have already described.

The majority of the workmen employed at these establishments are persons banished from Russia, who receive from the police a stamped permission to reside on the spot for the term of one year. The permission is renewable at the end of that period. As the number of speculators increases, and the number of labourers rests pretty much the same, the price of labour has risen considerably within the last few years. We had our accounts from the best authority, namely, the proprietors themselves; and as we know no particular object they could have in deceiving us, believe them to be correct. The workman receives in hard money about eighteen roubles a month; in addition to this he is lodged, fed, and provided with a variety of articles which are luxuries to him, such as tobacco and brandy, at the expense of the employer. Some of the principal establishments are three hundred versts from Tomsk, out of any main road, to which all provisions, flour,

meat, fish for their numerous fast-days, and other necessaries, must be conveyed on horseback, so that the expense to the employer is very great. We were told by one of them that he calculated every labourer to cost him three roubles a day, that is, nearly three shillings, a sum which no man can make by simple manual labour, perhaps, in any other country of the world. Mr. Astaschéf employs a thousand labourers annually at this price; but then it is only during a portion of the year, from the month of April at the earliest, to the beginning of October.

Before the year 1829 no gold was found in this part of Siberia, and, in fact, very little to the east of the Ural. In that year, a merchant at Tomsk, of the name of Popof, who was already possessed of a very considerable fortune, heard accidentally that a deserter, concealed in the woods, a hundred and fifty versts east of the town, had found gold in the sands. He was an old man, and had a daughter, through whose means Popof discovered the place where her father had been digging, and immediately got a grant of the district. At first he was not very successful, the produce being only about half a *zolotnik* to a hundred puds of sand washed. He then changed the theatre of his speculations, and removed his establishment to the northward, sixteen hundred versts north of Tobolsk, and north-west of Berézof. Here he found gold, but not in great quantities; and as the soil there is constantly frozen, the expense was very great; and all the necessaries of life extremely dear, no houses, and few workmen to be obtained. After having spent, in all, sixty-three thousand roubles, he returned to his former field of

operations, and at the time of his death in 1832, had succeeded in amassing four or five puds of gold annually. But before he did this, he had searched in three hundred different spots in the neighbourhood of Tomsk. A short time previous to his death, he is said to have lent to Mr. Astaschéf, of whom we have spoken, forty thousand roubles to begin his researches with.

About the same period, came a rich merchant from Ekaterinburg, of the name of Riazánof, with a capital of two hundred thousand roubles to embark in the same speculation, and spent the whole of it without finding any gold. At last he fell in with a rich vein near the small river Kundustnik, of which Mr. Astaschéf gained intelligence, and made his application for the ground, so as to deprive the other of his lawful property, after so much time and money had been thrown away, before he was lucky enough to hit upon the treasure. A lawsuit on the subject was the consequence; but Riazánof finding that his rival had too much protection, and that he should probably lose his action, saw there was nothing for it but coming to a compromise with him. The little river, near which they had commenced operations, is about a hundred versts in length, and they agreed to divide it. The speculation turned out well, the produce being a *zolotnik* to the hundred pud, or double what Popof had found. After this they formed a company, together with several of the first personages at Petersburg, as it is said, the management, of course, being with the former, and the latter being what we call sleeping partners, except that their capital and influence, if

required, made them very desirable associates. The Emperor is reported to have heard of this confederation, and to have hinted to some of the parties, that it was contrary to law for them to be concerned in such an enterprise, and in consequence they sold their shares to Mr. Astaschéf, who is now a *millionaire*.

The place where their establishment was formed, and which turned out so lucrative an affair, is in the government of Yénisséik, near the rivers Touba and Kan. The best veins are generally found in small rivulets, which run into larger rivers; and it would, in fact, be useless to find gold in a district where there is no water, as so much is required in washing the sands which contain it. The most profitable establishment that exists in this part of Siberia, belongs also to Messrs. Astaschéf and Co., situated near the river Khorma, which falls into the Birussa, the frontier of the two governments of Irkutsk and Yénisséik. It is in the country of a people called the Karagas, who are as savage and uncivilized as the Kirghis almost. Mr. Astaschéf told us that it produced, in the year 1840, sixty-nine puds of gold, at the rate of three *zolotniks* to the hundred puds of sand and stone. On the calculation of a net profit of twenty-five thousand roubles the pud, this fortunate society would, therefore, have made in one year two million of roubles, and the greater part of it fell to the lot of one man, as he had bought up most of the shares of those who retired from the company on the Emperor's hint being given them. The immense quantity of sand which must have been washed to produce this golden result, is something almost incredible, and what is more, there

is no assignable limit to the riches of this individual, who is under fifty years of age, for there is every probability that not only the sands where they now are at work will not be exhausted for fifteen or twenty years, but that many other spots in the neighbourhood may be equally full of treasure. It is enough to call up the shade of Queen Christina of Sweden, and others who have spent their lives and fortunes in search of the philosopher's stone, if they could but know how much more easily it is found now, without the help of crucibles and alembics. Should such immense profits, however, be realized for any length of time, it is just possible that the government may interpose and claim some share of the proceeds, at least by increasing the tax, which is now of a trifling nature, and there cannot be said to be any great injustice done we apprehend.

The process of washing is very simple, though improvements in machinery would diminish the expense materially, and what is of more importance, from the want of workmen, enable them to increase their operations considerably, which must now be limited in proportion to the number of labourers they can obtain. We believe it would be a most profitable speculation for any clever inventor of machinery to go out there, to devise some new plan for cleaning the materials from which the gold is extracted, and we are convinced he would make his fortune, as he might obtain a patent as easily as in this country. A large wooden machine is placed on an inclined plane, formed into different compartments, which are divided off by immense iron combs. The first of these is of a very strong and coarse description, as the material to pass through

them is composed of large pieces of quartz, stone and sand mixed together. Gold is generally found in quartz, which must be bruised into moderate sized pieces; but the time employed in so doing is often so great, that a good deal of gold is sacrificed, because it is not worth while to spend so much in breaking the stones. Water is then poured on the mass, and the larger pieces, and much of the sand is got rid of; the gold being heavier, stays at the bottom. This process is repeated several times, till all the sand and refuse has passed away, when the gold remains mixed with iron dust, with which it is usually accompanied.

Large morsels of pure gold are often found unalloyed with baser matter; we have seen some weighing six and seven pounds in Siberia, and in the Museum at Petersburg, a block found by the Emperor Alexander in the Ural, weighing twenty-four pounds, is valued at 26,286*l.* sterling. When the Emperor was visiting the mine where it was found (it was not in sand), he is said to have kicked it accidentally, and the object which came in contact with the Imperial toe, on investigation, turned out to be this valuable mass of gold. It is just possible that it had been dug out before, and was replaced in that spot in order to give his Majesty the honour of finding it. It was found in the Imperial mine of Alexandrofski in the Ural.

Great as these profits are, the establishments in the Ural are still more productive; the proportion of gold to the refuse at Miask, near Zlataoust, is much greater, and the process of working it is better understood.

There is a small plot of sand, about five versts long

and six hundred feet wide, in a little river which falls into the Tonguska, about eight hundred versts from Tomsk, not far from the Yénisséi, which is perhaps the most productive of any part hitherto worked; but then it is of very small extent. It is said that as much as a pound of gold has been extracted from the hundred pud of sand, and that the average of the whole gives twenty *zolotniks* to the hundred pud. This may well be, if it is found in large masses separate from the stone and sand. The thousand workmen employed by Mr. Astaschéf cost, perhaps, altogether five hundred roubles per head for the six months during which they work. The expense then would be half a million of roubles; to this must be added the expenditure necessary for keeping up the machinery and houses for the labourers to live in, the cost of sending the gold to Barnaoul, the various presents they give to the officers of all ranks and conditions connected with the establishment there, as well as at the mint in Petersburg, all which they calculate very highly, perhaps more so than is quite true, and the fifteen per cent. the government receives for conveying it to Petersburg, assaying and coining; and then the proprietor receives from thirty-five to forty thousand roubles the pud, according to the carat. When all these deductions are made, the net profit is certainly not less than twenty-five thousand roubles the pud, as we stated before. The gold is coined into ducats at Petersburg, and the proprietor has the option of taking them, or *assignats*, as he pleases. The Russian government some time ago came to an understanding with the Dutch government about the coining ducats; as

they have contracted several loans at Amsterdam, it suits them better to pay their interest in ducats, the coin of that country, as it saves the expense of transactions with bankers.

Gold has also been found further east, on the Angarà, and in the mountains about Nertchynsk, and there is no doubt that in process of time, when the population is augmented, and that part of the empire becomes more civilized, and better organized, that a vast increase will be made in the amount of treasure rescued annually from the bowels of the earth. The gross amount of gold now produced in the Russian dominions, probably far exceeds that even of the Brazils, and every year the quantity is considerably increased. It is useless to give the published tables of the relative proportions found in the different districts,—and it is even doubtful whether the gross amount is not a little under-stated in the official documents. We know, from indisputable authority, that in the year 1840 the sum total was eight hundred puds, and they expected it would be increased to a thousand last year, but we have not heard the result. According to official accounts, in the governments of Tomsk and Yénisséik, the increase has been from one pud and ten pounds, to two hundred and eleven puds and thirty-nine pounds since 1829. Supposing the greater part of this is paid in *assignats*, as it undoubtedly is, and that the value to the government of the pud of gold when coined, is nearer fifty than forty thousand roubles, it has at its disposition, in metallic currency, a sum of two million sterling annually, calculating eight hundred puds at forty-seven thousand roubles each, the produce

of their own dominions! There is, at all events, that addition to the assets in the Imperial treasury, and it matters not whether the profit goes to the government or individuals, the public in general is benefited by it. There does not, however, appear to be as much gold in circulation as would be expected from the quantity that issues annually from the mint, and this is accounted for in two ways. The drain on the metallic currency, which is made by the payment of interest, *à l'étranger*, is one, the other a more singular one, which proves the disadvantage of the insecurity of property, even among the peasants. It is a known fact that a great deal of gold gets into the hands of the serfs, who prefer it to *assignats*, as it is less likely to be lost in case of fire. Many of them, who are much richer than people in general have any idea of, fearing that their wealth should be discovered, and seized upon either by the police or their lords and masters, bury their treasure in the ground. Not daring even to trust their nearest relatives with the secret of the hiding-place of their riches, they not unfrequently go out of the world without having declared where they have deposited the treasure, and in this way large sums in gold and silver are supposed to be lost for ever. We have heard many individual cases cited where this is known to have occurred, owing to the possessor delaying to reveal his secret till he was *in extremis*, and the hand of death overtaking him somewhat sooner than he had calculated upon.

Of the forty thousand roubles which Mr. Astaschéf borrowed to begin his speculation with, he is said to have spent thirty-five thousand without any success.

He frankly admits that there is no skill or credit in finding a vein of treasure; that many, who from their knowledge of the locality, and some geological science o boot, should have been most successful, have constantly failed, and that, as we set out by stating, good fortune is all that is requisite. Notwithstanding this, we should think that a good geologist would have an advantage in knowing, at least, the strata where gold is not likely to be found, and so would save much time and expense, although he might not find it more readily than an uninformed person. Geological knowledge would, however, perhaps be more valuable in mountain research, than in the sands of a river.

As Tomsk is one of the principal places at which the exiles are established, we had an opportunity of seeing something of their condition. We have already said that a great proportion of them are employed in the gold-washing establishments, and that their rate of wages, and general comforts, are infinitely higher and greater than they could ever receive, not only in Russia, but in any other country we are acquainted with. In addition to those who are thus employed, all the servants in the houses of people of rank and wealth at Tomsk are taken from the same class. We have heard them always described by their masters as most excellent and trustworthy persons, that no thefts or disorder takes place, and from the experience we had of them, we can fully corroborate the fact. In the whole immense journey we made, without having ever taken more precautions than we should have done in any other country, we only lost one single article, and that not in Siberia. As we have stated in the

beginning of this work, in speaking of them at the Sparrow Hills, the greater part of the exiles are sent to colonize for *vagabondage*, and probably the whole of the persons employed as domestic servants belong to this class. Those who prefer to establish themselves in the country as farmers, are provided with a house, thirty acres of land, or more if they can cultivate it, a cow, some sheep, and a hundred and twenty-five roubles in money, as an outfit. With this they have every prospect, by industry, of becoming not only independent, but wealthy.

The price of corn has been raised a hundred per cent. within a few years, owing to the increase in the number of speculators who have established themselves at and about Tomsk, so that the agriculturist has an ample return for his labour, and the certainty of a comfortable existence. There is no such thing as chains, no punishment or hardship inflicted, they are simply under the *surveillance* of the police, which is a condition from which in fact no one is more or less exempt. Those who are acquainted with any trade, or have any skill to employ in any profession above the common order of working men, are sure to make a profitable business. There being no indigenous tailors, or shoemakers, or watchmakers, or tradesmen of any sort, the arrival of any such persons is an acquisition to society at large, and all these are now found there, certainly equal, if not superior, to those found in any country town in or out of the Russian dominions. The abandoned criminals are sent farther on, of whom we shall speak in giving some description of Irkutsk, and even these are infinitely better off, than they have any

right to expect, or we firmly believe than they deserve. We know that among those who work in the gold-washing establishments for their daily bread, there are many, and these are principally Poles, who have seen better days, and belonged to a very different class of society than that into which they are here thrown. They, probably, prefer to live here in seclusion, rather than be exposed to public gaze either as servants or shopkeepers, knowing nothing of agriculture. Nor do we mean for one moment to deny, that cases of hardship and injustice frequently occur where political crimes are the causes of banishment. We only speak of the general condition of the masses. This, however, we can take upon us to assert, and defy contradiction, that there is not at this moment in any part of Russia one single human being *working in the mines* by order of government for *political offences*. Did delicacy not forbid us, we could mention some great names now under sentence of banishment in Siberia, of whose guilt the most liberal cannot deny the blackness, or the justice of their condemnation, whose state, excepting their being precluded from returning to Petersburg and their homes, is in every other respect, as comfortable as it can be. Such persons have their families about them, and though their children born since their arrival in Siberia are not noble, they can, and doubtless will become so, by going to the military colleges, and entering the service like other people. The law only allows each of such persons to receive from their relations a thousand roubles a year, in money, though any amount of articles of necessity or even luxury may be sent them. This law, however,

like many others is constantly broken, and, probably, not without the connivance of the authorities on many occasions. There are several we could mention who do receive a great deal more.

The Russians, though with fewer ties perhaps of home and friends than most other people, (we speak of course of the lower orders) from their being dependent on the lord of the soil to which they belong, and never in a state of liberty, as the term is generally comprehended, have still a fonder clinging to their country than many other nations. We believe it would be more difficult to persuade a Russian peasant to a voluntary colonization, even in a country where he would meet only his own countrymen, and find his own language spoken, than any other people. Indeed, in England, a man who has not the means of existence at home among the lower classes has much more difficulty in persuading himself to send his son to Australia, than people in the upper classes have to send their sons for twenty years to India. This may be partly owing, perhaps, to their doubt and uncertainty as to how he will really be provided for when he gets there. The same is the case in Russia. We have often heard those who have been banished to Siberia, after they have been sometime established there, assert how much better their condition is, and that they would advise their friends at home, if possible, to come out there by way of bettering themselves. In spite of this, there are every year a great number who make their escape, and go back to Russia, with the great probability of being discovered and knouted, and having to make the long journey over again. But these also are criminals,

who run any risk rather than remain in a simple quiescent state, though they have nothing to complain of, and are certainly better off, than they can hope to be under the constant dread of detection. We have ourselves talked to them under these circumstances when again captured, and they have admitted the fact; so that no argument can be drawn from the frequency of the attempts at escape, of the state in which they are, when in Siberia. It is a compulsory banishment, which is all they can say against it; but that is enough to induce them to attempt to get rid of it at any risk. The majority of those who thus escape are from Irkutsk, where the more notorious felons, murderers, and incendiaries, are condemned to hard labour; which is, however, not of a very rigorous nature, as we shall show hereafter.

The government of Tomsk, the smallest of the four governments of West Siberia comprises a surface of 22,446 square miles. It may be a little more, perhaps, now, because a few years ago a change was made in the disposition of the governments of Omsk, Tomsk, and Tobolsk, when a part of the former was given to the latter two. This calculation makes it equal to the 1627th part of the whole square surface of the globe. It lies between the 49° 30′ and 61° 30′ parallels of north latitude. The south-east point is very mountainous, it contains a large portion of the Altai; the south-western part is full of morasses and lakes, most of them bitter, being impregnated with sulphuric natron or impure glauber salt. In some of these there is sweet water, containing a considerable deposit of common culinary salt, and in others magnesia. Where

the lakes abound, there are no forests. The north again is marshy and contains large forests, and is inhabited by a people called Taygar. The greater part of the southern district belongs to the establishment of the mines, comprising Biisk, Kolyvàn, and Barnaoul, which were originally crown property and given by the Emperor to the mines, that part of Biisk being excepted where the Kalmucks reside in the south-east of the Altai, who, as we have mentioned, pay tribute to Russia as well as China. Kusnetsk belongs also to the mining district, excepting the part inhabited by the so-called Tatars of Tomsk, the Telengoutes, and three hundred Russians, peasants of the crown.

The remaining part of the government of Tomsk, comprising the district of Kainsk, is still crown property, and is occupied by the crown peasants, who are independent of the officers of the mines, a few Tatars, and Ostiaks. The town of Kainsk is, however, under the authority of the mines, with those of which we have before spoken, Kolyvàn, Barnaoul, Kusnetsk, Biisk, Semipolatinsk, Ust-Kamenogorsk, Zménogorsk, and Narym, formerly, but no longer, a town. It may be interesting to some of our readers to give a table of observations, made by our friend Mr. de Hedenström at his residence nine versts from the town of Tomsk, we therefore subjoin it.

The mean temperature of each month is on the scale of Reaumur:—

		Degrees.
November,	1840,	— 12·7847666
December,	——	— 18·5132580
January,	1841,	— 17·7940379
February,	——	— 12·5376964

			Degrees.
March,	1841	—	4·5277777
April,	——	+	0·0026530
May,	——	+	13.5365000
June,	——	+	13·1370000
July,	——	+	15·2225800
August,	——	+	9·3666666
September,	——	+	2·3488888
To the 20th October	——	+	0·3680000

From this it appears that the mean annual temperature is — 1°.08. The greatest cold was on the 31st of December, — 36°. The greatest heat in the shade towards the north + 23°.25 at twelve, two, and four o'clock on the 13th of July. In the sun on the 21st of July the thermometer was as high as 40°.

The mean height of the barometer in English inches and the corresponding scale of Réaumur was as follows:—

	Inches.		Degrees.	
From the 17th of January to the 1st of February	30·19546	+	13·99106	R.
The month of February	30·15046071	+	14·25871	R.
„ March,	29·693290	+	15·164	R.
„ April,	29·9109	+	14·2818	R.
„ May,	29·581	+	15·543	R.
„ June,	29·496	+	14·563	R.
„ July,	29·596451	+	16·98	R.
„ August,	29·686	+	13·7474	R.
„ September,	29·692	+	13·556	R.
To the 20th of October,	29·800	+	14·4	R.
Mean.....	29·78	+	14·65.	R.

The table of winds was as under, and the observations were made in this way: east and west are marked only when the wind was due east and west; N.W.,

W.N.W., E.N.E., are given to the north; E.S.E., W.S.W., S.W., and S.E., are given to the south.

		S.	N.	E.	W.	
In the last half of January,	1841,	42	16	9	5	times
„ February,	——	192	35	...	7	„
„ March,	——	322	147	16	6	„
„ April,	——	358	154	6	4	„
„ May,	——	223	48	1	11	„
„ June,	——	151	91	5	15	„
„ July,	——	141	88	12	39	„
„ August,	——	145	98	1	35	„
„ September,	——	188	34	30	18	„
To the 20th of October,	——	137	22	3	8	„
		1899	733	83	148	times

In the year 1841, the season was later than the preceding one. The thaw did not take place till a fortnight later. In 1840 the ground was fit to receive the seed on the 21st of April, in 1841 not till the 5th of May. The white frosts here are almost as fatal to the crops, as we have before stated them to be farther to the south-east. In the two latter years they began on the 2nd and 3rd of August, and the oats and tobacco were nipped in consequence. The rye is the grain which suffers the least from them, and is, therefore, the most profitable crop to the farmer. It returns forty-three times the quantity sowed. In compensation for the lateness of the spring in 1841, the winter was also proportionally late; the river Tom which runs through the town of Tomsk, and was frozen over in 1840 the 8th of October, but was free from ice on the 20th in 1841, how much later we cannot say. The winter also in Petersburg appears to have been unusually retarded.

The census of the population of the government of Tomsk made in 1841, gave a total of 459,000 persons of both sexes, so that the ratio is not quite twenty-three to the square mile, according to the calculation made above. When out of this number a large proportion have other occupations than agriculture, it is clear that much land which might be profitably brought into cultivation, must be left untilled.

We found at Tomsk a singular individual, a countryman of our own, who has established there a *trakhtir*, or little inn, with a billiard-room, the first of the sort which was known in this town. His name is Crawley; and he is one of the family of Albinos, who was exhibited in London some years ago, and afterwards travelled all over Europe, into Greece and Turkey, and then thought he should make a good speculation of going to China. His father was brought by some traveller from Abyssinia as a young man, and married in London an English woman, and took her name. The offspring of this marriage was five children, three sons, all like the one at Tomsk, and two daughters of the mother's complexion. The one in question is now nine and thirty, has very long hair like a woman's, which is tied up behind in a *queue*, milk white, and as fine and soft as silk. He has a fair complexion, and little or no beard, and all the hair on his body is the same colour as that of his head. His eyebrows and eyelashes are the same, and his eyes rose-coloured, something lighter than a ferret's. He has long ceased to exhibit himself for money; but made a great deal at Petersburg and Moscow. After that time he did not find so many curious persons on his journey east-

ward to Siberia, and finding his purse diminish, thought it better not to risk spending the rest for nothing, or his plan was to go to China. His remaining capital he expended in buying some premises at Tomsk, and says he is doing well, and should do *very* well, but for the long credit he is obliged to give to a certain class of his customers, many of which debts, in the long run, become very bad ones. He has been established there about three years, and is evidently flourishing from his having bought a new house last winter for a considerable sum of money. He speaks five or six languages.

John Bull *will* get on wherever he settles himself. The large fortunes made by Englishmen in Russia in former days are no longer so easy to realize, because the sons and grandsons of those who fixed themselves there permanently seventy or eighty years ago have the advantage of being English, but born in Russia, so that they know the language and customs naturally better than any new-comers. With all this they do very well in Petersburg; but the jealousy of the lower classes in the country is a most serious, and almost insurmountable impediment.

Since we were at Tomsk, the Governor, General Beger, has been called into the council of the Mining Corps at Petersburg, and his place supplied by a Mr. Tatarinof, formerly at the head of the mining establishment at Nertchynsk.

We have before spoken of various superstitions prevalent in the northern parts of Siberia, it would seem their ramifications are extended far south, if that was not the original seat of them, which is more probable. There is a German gentleman, who has been

established for a few years at Tomsk, a clever, sensible man, a good mechanic, and musician, and one who has nothing about him to make one imagine that he is weak enough to give too easy an ear to tales of the marvellous, who recounted to us the following, which occurred to himself. He declared solemnly, that though he had often heard of the superstition, he was just as incredulous as ourselves, but that the fact in question staggered him. He had had occasion to employ some of the Tatars in the neighbourhood upon a building he was constructing, and having quarrelled with one of them on some account, was obliged to discharge him. The fellow went away muttering that he would have his revenge. Our informant is a remarkably good shot with a rifle, and his rifle, which we have often seen, is a very good one. One day, soon after this affair with the Tatar occurred, he was out shooting *gelinottes*, and had shot particularly well, not missing a shot the whole morning. It happened to be a holiday, and the Tatar was out shooting too, and he met him. The Tatar came up to him, and said, "You have killed your last *gelinotte* to-day, you will kill no more." Our friend knew very well what he meant, did not put himself out of temper, but laughed at the fellow, who repeated his words. Presently he saw a *gelinotte* at the top of a tree, fired at it and missed, and he assured us, on his honour, that he fired eight times at the bird without touching a feather. Thinking he might have been made unsteady by what the Tatar had said to him, and that he was nervous, he begged a friend, who was with him, an excellent shot, as indeed they all are there, to take his rifle and try *his* luck with it; he did so, and

with the same result, the whole day *he* never touched a feather. The following morning, when he had slept upon it, he tried the rifle at a mark, and still he could do nothing. The prevalent superstition is, that these Tatars have a charm, by which they can prevent a rifle shooting straight by mere simple words, without touching it, as on this occasion. There are others who have a counter-charm, and it does not follow that a man who knows the one, should know the other also. Our friend was disconsolate, and began to be a convert to the popular belief, and actually, as he informed us, found out a Tatar who knew the counter-charm, paid him a sum of money to exorcise his rifle, and from that time forth it has shot as well as before. That the latter part is true, we can vouch; for the rest we have nothing to say, but that we had no reason to doubt our informant's veracity. They offer to sell their secret for twenty-five roubles, but we had not faith enough to make us throw away our money.

Another wonderful story of the same description they relate there, which we were also assured had positively occurred. Some time ago there was a famous robber, who was notorious for the number of thefts and murders he had committed, and who had established himself with his wife in the mountains, and all attempts to take him had been in vain. The wife loaded his rifle for him, and assisted him in all his engagements with the police. At last an active officer, with a body of three hundred peasants, was sent against him, and he shot forty of them, without a single ball ever touching him, so that at last the only thing to be tried was taking him by assault on the steep rock,

where he was stationed. All was to no purpose, the peasants fell one after another, till they would not return any more to the attack. In this emergency an old man offered, for a sum of five hundred roubles, and a promise on oath that he should not be tried for sorcery, to undertake to make him prisoner. The bargain was made, and the old man merely got on his horse, rode round the mountain where the brigand was ensconced, repeated his charm, and the man was taken without any further difficulty. *Credat Judæus ! ! !*

The town of Tomsk is improving rapidly every year in its buildings and general appearance. A number of handsome brick houses are in construction, and if many other speculators, in the search for gold, succeed as some of its inhabitants have done, in a very few years it will be a most agreeable residence. There are several manufactories of soap and cloth, a large distillery of brandy, good barracks, military and civil hospitals, an establishment for foundlings, a large military school, and a district college, a well-stocked public dispensary, a good club, and, as we have said, a most hospitable and sociable society. During our stay here we had the pleasure of again seeing Prince Gortschakof, the Governor-general, who came for a few days on his annual tour of inspection, and the town was very gay with dinners and balls in his honour. General Falkenburg, from Omsk, was also here some time on his way to Kiakhta, his district, as general of *gendarmerie*, comprising the whole of Siberia as far as that point.

We lost no time after our arrival in disposing of our carriage, as it was out of the question attempting to proceed farther, excepting in a carriage of the

country, a *tarantass*, placed on a sledge, the winter having fairly set in. We were fortunate enough to dispose of it for the same sum it cost at Moscow. It certainly was not much the worse for the journey, and the purchaser had a good Moscow carriage without the expense of bringing it four thousand versts. We were extremely well lodged, as we said, opposite to the governor's, in a handsome, solid, but wooden house; the carriage and imperials had been taken away by the new owner, and a *tarantass*, purchased in its stead, brought into the courtyard; and our effects were scattered in consequence in various parts of the rooms which we inhabited. At about seven o'clock on the morning of the 14th of November (it was on a Sunday morning), we were sleeping, as usual, on the floor, (for we were never in a bed from the time we left Moscow till we returned to it, except on two occasions,) and sound asleep, when we were suddenly roused by our companion calling out "Fire! fire!" We got up at first rather leisurely, and fancied we heard some one in the next room, which did not belong to us, throw water on the door against which our pillow rested, and turned to our companion, saying we thought it was extinguished, but he had disappeared. In an instant the smoke and flames rushed out from beneath the door against which we had been sleeping a minute before, and we had just time to collect the cloak which had formed our covering, and being perfectly undressed, to hurry on a pelisse and a pair of boots, in order to save our effects. In this way we went down into the courtyard with as much as we could carry, there being 25° of cold, and three times came up and down with

our goods and chattels, having just time enough to save everything of any consequence, which we could recollect where to lay our hands upon. The third time the flames had gained head so much, that it was impossible to attempt to do any thing further; but the scene we shall never forget. The upper story of the house (we were *au premier*) was occupied by the family to whom it belonged, there were several young children, and it being Sunday morning nobody was up, and the screaming and confusion beggars all description. There was but one staircase, and a passage to it common to us both, which we found blocked up by one of those immense coffers, which are seen in all rich Russian merchants' houses, containing their money, which, of course, was the first thing they thought of saving. We were lucky enough to save everything of any value; a few trifles, with some minerals, and a few Chinese curiosities we had collected at Semipolatinsk, were all we lost. Our companion was not so fortunate, for instead of assisting to save his things, he left all to his servant, and ran over to the governor's to call his people to his aid; the consequence was that he lost a good deal, and, as in a journey of that kind one, of course, only takes what is absolutely necessary, any loss is serious, because, especially there, one is not sure of being able to repair it. When we had got our effects into the *tarantass*, by dint of a good deal of vociferation, we persuaded some peasants to drag it over to the governor's, and having seen it in safety, went into his house to dress.

The excitement of the moment prevented us feeling the intensity of the cold. The scene from the opposite

windows was magnificent; in less than half an hour after we quitted it, the whole house was one body of flame, and in two hours it was burned to the ground. Every exertion, however, was made to put out the fire, but in vain. The engines were there instantly; all the military and police on the spot, and the greater part of the inhabitants, all of whom were obliged to work at the engines, and supply water, which was in abundance, in spite of the severe frost; it froze, however, of course, immediately, and in a wooden house, dried as it is by being constantly heated all over with stoves, it seems a perfect impossibility to arrest the fury of the flames. Happily no lives were lost, and no accident happened. The proprietor saved literally nothing, except the strong box, which was got down stairs on the first alarm. There was plate to the value of ten thousand roubles in the house, which, of course, all melted, and some little of it was rescued from the ruins afterwards. Every thing was consumed; the fire had been burning, it is supposed, some hours before it was discovered, and the flames were seen through the windows in the street, at the same moment we became aware of it inside. It was thought to have originated in the following manner. In the next room to us, in the corner close at the back of our head, there was, as is usual in every room in every Russian house small or great, an image. This happened to be a very handsome and costly one. There was in the family an old man, and an old woman, the latter being half an idiot, who were *Roskolniks*, and who had got up at four o'clock in the morning to go to their devotions. Before she went out, the old woman had lighted the image with

the wax-taper as usual, but instead of placing it straight up, so as not to touch the frame-work of the image, she had placed it slanting, so that when it burned down to a certain point, it naturally set fire to the frame in which the Virgin was encased.

We had a narrow escape of being burned to death without doubt, another quarter of an hour and it would have been too late; we slept so sound that the flames came out under the door against which we were sleeping, and all but touched our heads, so that our friends enquired whether our hair was singed; in spite of which our companion had considerable difficulty in awakening us, and he slept at some distance from the spot from whence the smoke issued, so that we ought naturally to have done that office for him. Nothing could exceed the activity of the authorities and firemen in doing all that was possible to arrest the flames; in fact, all over Russia, and especially in Petersburg and Moscow, the arrangements in case of fire are admirable, and most expeditiously put in practice. But where many of the houses are built entirely of wood, the only hope is to cut off the communications, and prevent the mischief spreading beyond the house where it originates. In this they were successful: our house was isolated in a large courtyard, and though at first the wind was high, and the roof of the adjoining house was taken off for precaution's sake, nothing but the house itself was burned, not even the outhouses belonging to the establishment. Though we lived in the main street, which is of considerable width, the flames set directly across towards the governor's house, where we stood viewing the catastrophe,

and the heat was at one time so great, that we could not bear to put our hands on the windows, and we were for a little while under apprehension that the fire might communicate even at that distance. The wind, however, fortunately subsided entirely, and by mid-day all was as if it had never been, though we heard that the ruins smoked for six weeks afterwards. The house was insured at Petersburg, we believe for quite its full value, which was a considerable consolation, particularly as it was quite new, the proprietor having met with the same accident three or four years before. We were immediately installed in a new lodging with General Falkenburg, who arrived that evening, and our first act on entering it, being unobserved, was to extinguish the Virgin's candle; a heinous offence doubtless, but *ictus piscator timet.* We did hear something whispered about the accident being attributed to the agency of an heretic inhabiting the house, but believe it was only a joke of some of our friends, for superstitious as they are, and attached to their religion, their tolerance towards all persons who profess a different creed from themselves is a peculiar mark of a Russian.

Notwithstanding the severity of the climate, and that the population of Siberia increases but very slowly, if at all, the instances of extraordinary longevity are not at all unfrequent. The Bishop of Tomsk told us that in his diocese the preceding year a man had died at the age of a hundred and sixty-two, having a son at the time of his death aged a hundred and ten. We heard of another person then living of upwards of a hundred and thirty years old, residing at a distance of

only sixty versts from Tomsk, but it was too far to go to see such a phenomenon. This longevity is, perhaps, attributable to the abstinence from animal food. In this neighbourhood, where fish is exceedingly abundant and cheap, it is probable that a man of the lower orders might have lived that great number of years, without almost tasting meat. But in the Russian statistics there are a number of cases cited of extreme old age; we remember to have read of a man, who, in the time of the Empress Catherine, was sent for to court at the age of a hundred and forty, who had given eighty-six subjects, by five wives, to her Imperial Majesty and her predecessors. He could not, by the bye, have been a member of the Russian-Greek church, however, as she only allows her children to enter three times into the holy state of matrimony, her daughters at least, and we imagine she is not so partial as to impose so glaring a disadvantage on the *beau sexe*. Old Parr had a son after he commenced his second century, and died at the age of a hundred and fifty-two.

We left Tomsk extremely pleased with our sojourn there, and grateful for the kindness and hospitality we had received from all classes. Among the acquaintances we made, was that of Mr. de Hedenström, whom we have so often quoted, and to whom we are indebted for so much of the information, which has enabled us *tant bien que mal* to fill these pages. He is, perhaps, better acquainted than anybody living with East Siberia, and though no longer connected with it officially, yet, from having inhabited various parts of Siberia, except for one interval of a year or two that he spent at Petersburg, since 1808, he has imbibed an affection

for it which few possess for any spot, least of all for one that is not their country. He was employed for three years during the preceding reign in making discoveries in Kamtchatka, which the commission under Baron Wrangel, the account of whose journey has been lately published, was sent to verify. An intrigue sometime afterwards removed him from the service, but in the year 1828 he was again employed by the present Emperor at Petersburg. Subsequently he was again the victim of persons whom he had made his enemies, by speaking the truth rather more freely than is customary or acceptable, but was appointed postmaster at Tomsk, which situation a third cabal drove him to resign in 1839. With all this he has preserved the goodwill of the Emperor, as we know he has received solid marks of his favour, since we left Siberia. The state of his health is now such, as to incapacitate him from entering the service again under any circumstances, in consequence of rheumatism he caught during his residence at Yakutsk, and the Sea of Okhotsk. His means are but very slender; he has a small estate nine versts from Tomsk, which, from his inability to leave his sofa, is not as productive as it might be, beyond which he has only a pension of twelve hundred and fifty roubles to live on. It is no small merit in Russia to be able to plead poverty in justification of one-self against any accusation, and one of the surest and strongest proofs of innocence. He has a good friend in the Governor-general, but it is too late to offer him much assistance. He is far from an old man, but disease has rendered him so prematurely, and he has fixed in his own mind the number of years he

has to live, which according to his calculation are not many. He is wrapped up in his literary pursuits like a true philosopher, and awaits his destiny with the most perfect resignation. We trust he may be deceived in his calculation, and survive by many years the term he has assigned himself. He is deeply interested in the well-being of Siberia, and his only regret is that it is out of his power to check the evils which he sees springing up around him. But he is, as others have been before him, a little in advance of the age in that country, and he knows it; but he consoles himself with the conviction that there is a great *avenir* in store for the country of his adoption, and with this feeling he will die content.

The road from Tomsk to Irkutsk, a distance of fifteen hundred versts, is as far as Krasnoyésk, five hundred versts, of much the same character as on the other side of Tomsk. The first part a Steppes without wood, further on there are more frequent villages inhabited by Tatars, that is, people of the same race as those whom the Russians found in the governments of Kasan and Perm, of a Turkish origin. Beyond this the traveller is prepared by a gradual undulation in the country for the mountainous district he is to pass through in East Siberia. There are some tolerably large forests and various small rivers, the lands being only partially cultivated.

One small town, Atchinsk, situated on the river Tchulyma, is met with before reaching Krasnoyésk, which has the appearance of being flourishing. It contains several churches, and many good-looking houses. The road here is very much cut up by the sledges

which are constantly passing with the heavy goods from Kiakhta, and there is no remedy for it as it would be impossible to remove the snow, which drifts considerably, and makes the travelling without springs anything but agreeable. It is, however, by no means the worst that is encountered between Moscow and Irkutsk.

Close to Krasnoyésk the scenery in summer must be very fine, having a great variety of hill and dale; and the cultivation is much more extensive than any we had seen on this side the Ural. The fine river Yénisséi, winding with its rapid stream through fields of corn and tobacco, gives a most picturesque character to the country. That branch of the Altai mountains which runs from Biisk and Kusnetsk in this direction, degenerates into plain between Atchinsk and Krasnoyésk; to the south-east are, what is called the ore mountains, in which various kinds of minerals abound, and in the small rivers which wash their base, considerable quantities of gold are now found. This valley of the Yénisséi is the most productive part of Siberia towards the east. Surrounded by mountains it is sheltered from the strong winds, and the heat, which in summer is very great, makes vegetation so rapid, that the finest crops are grown of corn, tobacco, and buckwheat, of which a very good porridge is made, and which is much eaten by the natives of all classes. To the west, the Altai takes the name of Téletskoi, one of the highest peaks of that mountain; on the south are the Sayane mountains, where gold is also found; these form the link of communication between the Altai and the Chinese chain. The soil of this valley is a

deposit of alluvial mud, which is capable of producing anything that the industry of man will apply to it, and the fine water meadows are a great source of profit in breeding cattle, and taking in others to graze from a distance. The winter, too, is not so severe as at Irkutsk. Captain Cochrane tells us, we know not on what authority, that the Emperor Paul had it in contemplation to establish a Scotch colony here; we think it would be advantageous to both countries if the present Emperor would transplant there some of our surplus population now.

The town of Krasnoyésk is large and thickly populated. It is, like Tomsk, but in a minor degree, the place of rendezvous for the searchers for gold, many of whom have been very successful in this neighbourhood. There is a very tolerable society, as usual a great deal of champagne drunk, and much hospitality to strangers. It is situated on a sort of island, formed by the junction of the Yénisséi and Katcha: on leaving it, the Yénisséi is crossed, being here near half a verst wide. After passing the small town of Kanskoi, about two hundred versts from Krasnoyésk, is the frontier of the government of Irkutsk, the commencement of East Siberia.

There is unfortunately no communication by water established between the governments of Yénisséisk and Irkutsk, which is a considerable loss to the latter, as the productions of the former, which might be multiplied to almost any extent, have no easy means of transport from one to the other. The consequence is, that the immense government of Irkutsk is obliged to supply its inhabitants with food by the produce of its

own agriculture, and even the two divisions of it, the eastern and western sides of the Baikal, are so difficult of access from one to the other, that the expense and trouble of conveying corn across the lake make it an exceedingly unprofitable affair. This falls heavily on the peasants, who must not only grow the necessary provisions of corn for themselves and families, but are obliged to supply the towns, all the military in the government, and the distilleries of brandy, the salt mines, and those of Nertchynsk; the northern provinces Yakutsk, Okhotsk, and Kamtchatka are also dependent on them for nearly all their bread.

But before we proceed further, it is necessary to give some account of those rivers which belong to this department, and of which we have not treated in our account of the Siberian rivers. The principal of these fall into the lake Baikal, and are as follows. The Upper and Lower Angarà, the Selenga, the Bargusine, the Birussa, the Turka, and Snégenaya; small and great, rivers and torrents, there are said to be a thousand which fall into this vast lake, or rather inland sea. Of these many are of course very small; on the maps there are not more than two hundred marked down, but rich as Russia is in maps, Siberia is the only country with which she has any connexion, that has not been accurately laid down. It would be no doubt a work of very considerable labour, which, however, would not be considered, if any real advantage was to be derived from it. The time will come when it may be useful and even necessary.

The upper Angarà falls into the Baikal after a course of seven hundred versts. The lower Angarà

issues from it sixty-one versts from the town of Irkutsk, being almost immediately of a prodigious depth and width. In two places near the town its width varies from seven hundred to two thousand feet, and its depth is already near sixty feet. At its *sortie* from the lake, however, though nearly two versts wide, it is very shallow, not ten feet; it soon enters a narrow defile, and is full of rapids and small cataracts, formed by large stones which fell, perhaps, into the Baikal, at the convulsion of nature which formed it. It then gradually increases in width till it nears the town of Irkutsk, where the small river Irkut falls into it. Erman states the town to be three hundred and twenty-five feet below the level of the lake, the descent, therefore, of the river is most rapid, as in a distance of sixty-one versts or forty English miles, it comes down to the level of the town.

Balbi imagines that the Selenga and lower Angarà were originally the same river; it would be, perhaps, more probable that the two Angaràs were so, and that the violent effort of nature which produced the Baikal lake, divided them. The perfect similarity between the rapidity of the two streams, as well as the quality of their waters, and the direction of the Baikal, make this a reasonable hypothesis. If the upper Angarà had the length of the Baikal added to it, before the lower Angarà issues from it, its whole course would be longer than that of the Selenga. Balbi gives, also, with reason, the preference to the lower Angarà over the Yénisséi, for its course is considerably longer than that of the Yénisséi, or Kem', from its source to their point of confluence near the town of Yénisséisk. It is also

wider and deeper. Balbi was not aware in all probability why the Kem' or Yénisséi had had the preference given to it by some geographers, who imagined the Kem' the principal branch*. The reason was this, and the error dates from the seventeenth century. The Cossacks who came from the westward conquering Siberia in the name of Russia, having built Narym to the north of the government of Tomsk, ascended the Ket', a navigable river, and heard from the Tonguse, that from a place called Makofsk, they were within a few days' journey of an immense river, whose environs were inhabited by other Tonguses, who called it in their language Yoandési, or the great river. The Cossacks explored the country, and arrived at the left bank of this great river, where they built an *ostrog* or village surrounded by pallisades, to which they gave the name of Yénisséisk, a corruption from Yoandési, and sent to Moscow a report of their progress. Soon after this another party of Cossacks, continuing their conquests, followed the right bank of the river, thinking it was the same, and stopped at a point which they found thickly peopled by the natives of the country. As it was necessary for them to have a place of residence in some way fortified against the attacks of the Tonguses, they built another village at the mouth of the river Katcha, where the banks were high and precipitous, to which they gave the name of Krasnoyésk from the red colour of the soil about it. Though they soon found

* Mr. Murray in his travels in North America observes, that the Missouri and Mississippi were in like manner confounded, and that the latter obtained the undue credit of being the parent instead of the tributary stream.

out that the river which ran close to their *ostrog* was a different one from that on which Yénisséisk was built, thinking they had really followed the same river, and having reported so to Moscow, they would not confess their error. In this way the Kem' or Yénisséi had the credit of being the large river which falls into the Icy Sea. The Cossacks of Yénisséisk crossing their own river, and following the right bank of it, soon discovered the real Yoandési, but not wishing to compromise their companions, said nothing about it, and gave the name of Tonguska, from that of the inhabitants of the country, to this stream.

After passing by the town of Irkutsk the Angarà is less rapid, as the ground falls gradually towards the north, before the Yénisséi joins it near Knasnoyésk, when it takes the name of the upper Tonguska; the Angarà is again joined from the east by the lower Tonguska, and several other rivers, and falls into a large gulf, called the Gulf of Yénisséi, at about 70° north latitude, and from thence pours itself into the Icy Sea.

The Selenga after a course of nearly a thousand versts empties itself into the Baikal on the south-east side, and brings into it an immense volume of water; its source is considerably more distant than that of the upper Angarà from the nearest extremity, or than that of the Bargusine, which falls into it more to the north. But the quantity of water brought in by these and the numberless other small rivers is prodigious, for which the only outlet is the lower Angarà. Of the other rivers in this region, some of which do, some do *not* pass into the Baikal, no particular notice is re-

quired; of the lake itself we shall speak in its proper place.

Captain Cochrane mentions as long ago as in 1821, when he made his Siberian journey, the perceptible difference on entering the government of Irkutsk, in the order and regularity established by the police of the district, and the sensible improvement in the cleanliness and well-being of the inhabitants. This has gone on increasing ever since; and under the able administration of the present excellent Governor-General Rupert, a better order of things is being established among the exiled criminals, of whom the worst class are stationed at Irkutsk, and in its neighbourhood.

The scenery now begins to take that fine mountain character for which East Siberia is famous; villages, too, are frequent, in which the exiles of a different class to those, of whom we have just spoken, reside. These are, as at Tomsk, under no restraint, but are perfectly free to follow any employment they choose, though most of them have their own lands to cultivate, and are chiefly occupied in agriculture. Among those who have been guilty at most of minor offences, and the majority have only been banished for *vagabondage*, good order is in general kept. There are occasional outbreaks, as may be supposed, where great numbers are collected together, and the other inhabitants complain, not without some reason, that too much liberty is allowed them. There are, every now and then, villages inhabited solely by Tatars; the roads are good, and cultivation general. A number of small towns, which offer nothing to detain

a traveller who is anxious to reach Irkutsk, are scattered at intervals along this picturesque route, and we should much like to make the journey in summer, as, of course, where scenery is concerned, a great deal is lost in the snowy season.

CHAPTER VIII.

Town of Irkutsk.—Englishmen there.—Classification of criminals.—Their state.—Mr. Dobell.—Their Treatment.—Conduct.—Necessity of being more severe with them.—Count Speranski's Siberian Code.—Knout.—Observations on Capital Punishments.—Road to Baikal.—Angarà.—Baikal Lake.—Mode of passing it.—Want of Steamers.—Mountains.—Probable formation of the Lake.—Products.—Road from it to Selenginsk.—Burates.—Roskolniks.—Government.—Ancient inhabitants.—Shamanism.—Siberian Plague.—Budhism.—English Missionaries at Selenginsk.

About sixty versts before reaching Irkutsk, is a government manufactory for cloth and glass, linen and paper, in which the transported are employed. The original machines were brought from England, and the others have been made from these models. The manufacture of each of these articles is arrived at great perfection, particularly that of glass. The establishment consists of two thousand persons, with an officer of the rank of colonel at the head of it. It is called the manufactory of Telminski, and is situated on a small river which falls into the Angarà. The inhabitants are no little proud of it, and consider it quite an oasis in the desert. The river is crossed by a ferry on entering the town of Irkutsk, which has an imposing appearance for a Siberian city.

Irkutsk is situated under the 52° north latitude; but the cold in winter is very severe, without being so constant as in other places. The thermometer is often as low as 35°, but the spring is earlier than at Tomsk. From the winding of the Angarà, and its being washed

by two other rivers, the Irkut and Ushakofski, it has the appearance of being a peninsula. A large number of the houses are now built of brick, and almost all the government buildings, which are very numerous. There is, as usual in all Russian towns, a large proportion of churches for the population; the number is fourteen, of which one is for the Protestant service, and a German clergyman, with a regular fixed stipend, officiates. The house of the governor-general is quite a palace, and that of the civil governor is also a very good one. In East Siberia there is only one family of hereditary nobility, (the civil and military *employés* being, of course, not included,) and that is of English origin. The ancestor is said to have been in the Scotch guard, and one of the few survivors among the gallant defenders of Albasyne, of which we have before given an account. The society is, however, numerous, and great hospitality reigns there. A number of very rich merchants are established in the town, and a large military force, as well as a host of civil *chinovniks* and *attachés* to the governor-general.

The population is about twenty thousand. Provisions of all descriptions are abundant and cheap, and most of the luxuries of life are found there, which, of course, come from Moscow, and are *not* cheap. The exiles are employed on public works, of which a great many are going on; independent of these, there is an immense establishment expressly for them, which is exceedingly well conducted, and has the advantage of combining utility with punishment. The second order of more abandoned criminals, who are condemned for a certain term of years to hard labour, are employed

here. In the large bazaar assigned to them all sorts of trades are carried on, the proceeds of which, after the expenses are deducted, are applied to the building and maintaining hospitals, and other charitable purposes. The prisoners are not chained, but guarded by military; their hours of labour are twelve in summer, and eight in winter. Their apartments are clean and comfortable, and their food and clothing good. We cannot, however, agree with Mr. Dobell entirely as to the happy results of a milder system being followed with these criminals, than is generally adopted in penal settlements of other countries. He launches forth into an eloquent *tirade* on the advantage of hard labour over scaffolds, axes, and fetters, principally, as it appears, to pay a compliment to his adopted Sovereign and country, at the expense of others, "whose claim," he says, "to the appellation of civilized, from the antiquity of the social compact, is far less just than that derived from the improvement of it by the banishing barbarous practices, and the establishment of laws tending to correct, instead of punish, the vices of our nature, and alleviate the misery attendant on them." Captain Jesse's remarks on Russian civilization prove how people differ about *facts* even, and he quotes Guizot to prove that civilization is *a fact*. With such a vast difference of opinion, the mean between the two is perhaps nearer the truth.

To Mr. Dobell's abstract proposition no one will be inclined to offer any opposition, the question is only whether the system works well, and whether it eradicates the vicious habits of those who have contracted them, and whether an injustice is not done to the

other members of society by the liberty which is given to such persons. Mr. Dobell says that it afforded him great pleasure to contemplate those *who had been once* the victims of depravity, exhibiting no longer anything to inspire him with the idea of their being criminals. Without trusting much to physiognomy, their countenances certainly would not inspire us with such a sentiment, for nothing can be well more repulsive than they generally are. But we happen to know certain facts connected with these gentry, which contradict the opinions of Mr. Dobell. A few years ago, when the present Governor-General Rupert undertook the management of this arduous government, he found it in such a state that no one dared go out of the town, without being armed up to the teeth, for fear of assassination. So frequently were murders committed by the criminals, that the loudest complaints were made by the other inhabitants, of the utter insecurity of life and property, that he was obliged to adopt the strongest measures, in order to put a stop to such a state of things. Two facts we will only mention, which we heard almost from eye-witnesses, and they were of constant occurrence.

One day one of these exiles, for whom a morbid sympathy exists even in Russia, went a short distance out of the town into a peasant's cottage, where he found only a little girl of ten years old. He inquired for her mother, who she said was gone out. Upon this the wretch took out his knife, and ripped her bowels open, and left her half dead without robbing the house or attempting to escape. The mother returned soon after, and found the child still alive, who

told her the name of the person who had committed the savage act; she gave immediate information to the police, who arrested the man, and he at once confessed his guilt, adding, moreover, that in the last six months he had committed no less than eight and twenty cold-blooded murders of the same sort without rhyme or reason. The incentive to it, he stated to be merely that he was tired of the monotonous life he was leading, and required some excitement which he gave himself in that manner.

The other case was that of an exile employed in one of the public buildings, and whom our informant saw immediately after the fact occurred. He was walking through one of the corridors with his axe stuck in his girdle, an instrument every man in Siberia carries, but which at least should not be allowed to a condemned felon, and saw one of the sentinels asleep. He coolly split the poor man's skull open, and killed him on the spot. Having done this he walked away, and when he came to the next sentinel quietly told him to go and remove the corpse of his comrade whom he had dispatched. Of the truth of these two stories we are as morally convinced as of our own existence, and moreover that they were not uncommon occurrences three or four years ago. The governor-general has, however, taken steps to root out the band of wretches who were in the habit of committing these atrocities, but he had a difficult task to perform. Such is the effect of a mild system; which has been sufficiently long in operation to have had a fair trial, and to have produced good fruits, had it been suited to the soil of Irkutsk. As is well known to every one, the

punishment of death does not exist in Russia, except in cases of extraordinary occurrence, such as revolution and high treason, when the Emperor takes upon himself to go beyond the law.

The late Count Speranski, minister of the interior, at the time of his death, and formerly governor-general of the whole of Siberia, one of the ablest men Russia perhaps ever produced, undertook, among other things, to make a new criminal statute-book, and an entire code of laws for the government of Siberia in particular. This Siberian code, perhaps, if laid before any jurists in the world, would be declared a master-piece of legislation, and one which reflected the highest honour on its composer. But it was a code fitted for a Utopian state of society, one which has never yet existed scarcely in the imagination of practical men, still less for one like that of East Siberia, the depôt for all the worst criminals of every description, which the various nations composing the vast Russian empire contribute to furnish; a society comprising some members to whom, for the sake of human nature, we hope a parallel is not to be found in the whole world, certainly not among civilized nations. A code of this description, which allowed a degree of liberty to the most depraved criminals wholly incompatible with the security of the rest of the inhabitants, was a manifest absurdity and injustice.

The hands of a governor-general, who has no authority to take any step without communicating first with the government at Petersburg, which communication requires two months backwards and forwards at least, are so completely tied, that he is, as he himself

expressed to us, capable of doing a great deal of harm, and incapable of doing any good. When we went with him to Petersburg, he said to us, that he should tell the Emperor, the only parties really under restraint in Siberia, are himself and his subordinates. The evil however had arrived at that pitch, that something must be done, and however unwilling the Emperor may be to return to anything like the severity of the old system, he was nevertheless obliged to give the two governors-general a secret power of punishing crimes of this atrocious description, in a way so as to cause death, without the forms of a capital punishment. Acting on this discretionary power, General Rupert arrested and tried by a court-martial half-a-dozen of this execrable gang, and they were sentenced to receive the *baguette*, in fact to run the gauntlet through six thousand men. The two of whom we have spoken above were included in the number, and in spite of so tremendous a sentence, which was duly executed, they did not die under the operation, but of course did not long survive when they were taken to the hospital. The example has had its effect, and for the moment at least these horrible scenes do not occur, but it is a matter of doubt whether they will not be obliged to revert to the punishment of death after all in extreme cases. If this *is* necessary, it does seem as if it would be more effective to let it be publicly understood, that the punishment of death would be the inevitable consequence of a conviction for murder. It may be questionable whether the sight of capital punishments deters others from committing the crimes for which it is incurred; but at all events if a man's life is to be

taken, it had better be done openly, and not appear the casual consequence of a severe punishment, which was not notoriously intended to have that effect. We say notoriously, because there can be no doubt that running the gauntlet through six thousand men cannot be intended not to be fatal, although we have heard such strange stories of what these ruffians are capable of going through, in the shape of corporal punishment, that such a result seems not to be inevitable. We heard a story from Mr. de Hedenström that occurred thirty years ago at Irkutsk when he resided there, which makes one doubt whether these wretches are human beings or not, both from the atrocities they are capable of committing, as well as the corporal suffering they can undergo without death ensuing.

In those times the knout was an instrument that with the handle and apparatus weighed *sixteen* pounds, it is now limited by law to *two*. A man had been guilty of some crime, such as we have related, and the then governor-general determined to make an example of him, and he was sentenced to receive one hundred and eighty blows with this formidable weapon at two periods, ninety at each. The law now limits it to twenty-five. Mr. de Hedenström had a French servant who was always boasting that he had seen and done all sorts of things, but his great anxiety was to see a man knouted. His master told him there was now a capital opportunity for him to gratify his curiosity; he rubbed his hands and was *enchanté*. As soon as the culprit was undressed and tied to the post, the Frenchman's courage began to ooze out at his fingers' ends, and at the first blow he fainted away.

The fellow received the ninety cuts, and was taken to the hospital, where the Frenchman went to visit him. At the end of a fortnight he was in a state to receive the other ninety *coups*, which were accordingly administered to him, and still he did not die under the operation. He lingered, however, only a week in the hospital, because it was in winter, when they say it is difficult to cure them, but that in summer he might have been saved, which, however, of course was not the intention of the governor. After a punishment of a much less horrible nature than this, if they give the sufferer a little brandy to restore him in the hospital, he generally gets over it, but if they wish to dispatch him they have only to give him a glass of water, which brings on apoplexy and instant death.

There is a class of persons among these criminals who are a phenomenon in the moral world, and one which we hope and believe exists no where else. They have a rage for blood to that violent degree, that they cannot resist the temptation whenever an occasion offers of satisfying it, as often as the fit is upon them, which appears to come on periodically. An acquaintance of ours at Irkutsk told us of what he had himself witnessed of this sort, which is almost incredible, but the authority is unimpeachable. One of the exiles, not among the abandoned class, who is coachman to a merchant in the town, is subject to these paroxysms of madness, for they can be nothing else, but he is rational enough to be perfectly conscious of it, and anxious to prevent the consequences. When he finds the mania coming upon him, he goes to his master, and entreats of him to put him in irons till the fit is gone off. It

lasts generally some days, at the end of which time he tells his master that he may let him loose, that the *furor* has subsided, and that he shall be perfectly harmless. What an agreeable state of society to live in!

We will not weary our readers with any further instances of the deplorable depravity of a portion of the convicts, who, under what is represented as a ruthless despotism, are suffered to live on in a state of comparative liberty, where, in any other country, they would inevitably have paid on the scaffold the forfeit of their crimes. We have proved enough, we hope, to convince the most humane, that beyond a certain point mercy degenerates into weakness, and becomes a curse to the well-disposed, without being productive of any real good effects on the evil-doers. Far as we are from wishing to render justice sanguinary, and to multiply unnecessarily capital punishments, we cannot but think that both human and divine legislation, not only authorises, but demands that the crime of murder should be atoned for by extreme penalties. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed," is the precept of a Lawgiver whose authority few will be inclined to impugn, and one which is amply sufficient to relieve the doubts of the most tender conscience on that point. True it is that the object of all legislation should be the prevention, and not the punishment merely of crime, but we can imagine nothing so likely to deter men from the committal of the most heinous offences, as the certainty that the penalty will be death. If that has no terrors, it is to us absurd to argue that the dragging on a hopeless existence, under

circumstances so painful as those in which convicts in our penal colonies are placed, can have much weight in preventing crime. Where minor offences are concerned, the fact of some persons having a scruple about the right of man to take another's life, and therefore not proceeding to prosecute the offenders, is wholly another question. Murder conveys to almost every mind such a peculiar idea of horror, that few, if any, would hesitate to bring a murderer to trial, from any feeling that the punishment is too severe. We hope we have said enough also to convince those who think with Mr. Dobell on the advantages of the milder system in Siberia, that *there* at all events it is misplaced, and that it is not quite so easy as he represents it to be, to convert the greatest criminals into good subjects by the establishment of work-houses and manufactories. Opportunity, as he says, is certainly thus given of making such persons useful to the state, and to themselves of reflecting on their past errors, and making their peace with an offended God. But it does not follow that they profit by the opportunity of doing either one or the other, and the experience of the facts we have related, would go far to prove the contrary.

There is considerable activity displayed at Irkutsk in many of the common branches of manufactures, and also in ship-building for the navigation of the Baikal, and conveyance of stores and convicts to the mines of Nertchynsk, as well as bringing back the produce of the mines there. The number of military stationed in the town, which, including the Cossacks, is not far short of four thousand, makes it a lively

residence. The situation of it is superb, surrounded by fine rivers, and the magnificent mountains out of which the lake has been formed. For a sportsman there cannot be a better place to reside in; within a short distance bears, wolves, elks, wild-goats are in abundance, and many sorts of game, of which the *gelinotte* is famous here, for having a much higher flavour than in other parts, which they acquire from eating the cones of the *Pinus cembra*, their principal food. A great variety of fish abound in the Baikal, though very few in the Angara, from the quality of the water, which is strongly impregnated with lime. Prince Gortschakof gave us a letter of introduction to General Rupert, the governor-general, which was of most essential service. His kindness was excessive. He is by birth a Hollander, a nephew of the late Count Suchtelen, and came to Russia at eight years of age, and is, of course, a Russian to all intents and purposes, not even speaking his mother tongue. He is also a Protestant, and to him is principally owing the establishment of a Protestant church at Irkutsk. He has a most valuable and interesting cabinet of mineralogy, and all that belongs to the natural history of Siberia, which is very rich in specimens that are rarely found in European collections. A governor-general, who has a taste for these pursuits, has, of course, many opportunities of making a collection, that do not fall to the lot of private individuals; the one in question has cost him a considerable sum of money.

But we have a long and very bad journey before us to Kiakhta, and as the season is not sufficiently advanced to cross the Baikal on the ice, a great *détour*

must be made by going round it. General Rupert is preparing to set out for Petersburg, and has kindly offered to take us in his suite, and there is very little time to spare, as we must get back from Kiakhta before Christmas, or we shall be left behind. From Irkutsk to the Baikal, about forty English miles, the throng of sledges, with their burdens, coming and going continually, is a scene of bustle not equalled, perhaps, in Russia, excepting a little previous to, and after the great fairs of Nijni and Irbit. Although the lake was not yet passable on sledges, the arrivals were numerous, in expectation of the important fact being announced, while some of them were going, like ourselves, to coast round it, instead of waiting for the ice being solid enough to allow them to cross over it. The view as you approach is magnificent, and in summer must be one rarely to be met with. The country is all cultivated, and the banks of the Angarà, studded with villages, every house possessing its quota of land, and industry appearing to preside among the involuntary inhabitants. Here certainly the traveller would not imagine that he was surrounded by felons, many of whom, in any other country, would have suffered the extreme punishment the law can inflict.

The Angarà, as we have before remarked, becomes wider the nearer to its source, and forms a bay at the point where it issues from the Baikal, in which, as soon as the season for navigation is over, the vessels are laid up in dock. The Baikal is rarely frozen over, so as to allow travellers to cross it, before the $\frac{10\text{th}}{22\text{nd}}$ of January, and what is singular enough, it is very seldom that the Angarà ever freezes at all the first twenty

versts from its source. There is a tradition that it did so in the year 1740, which was a remarkably severe winter. Close to the town it is generally frozen in December, though sometimes, as well as its parent lake, not till January, while all the other rivers in the neighbourhood are so in October. It thaws again between the 20th and 30th of March, old style, in a single night; the ice breaks up quietly, and disappears below the water, and in a day or two the river is perfectly clear. The little river Irkut, which falls into it, and the others in the vicinity, do not throw off their winter garb for a considerable time afterwards. This is a phenemenon for which, we believe, there is no explanation; the quality of the water will not accounft for it, and the outward air must affect it in the same degree as any other river. The water is warmer in winter than that of other rivers, and considerably colder in summer, is remarkably clear, and contains a large quantity of salt and lime, so that it is said not to be very wholesome for strangers, like the waters of the Neva, which act as a diuretic so strongly on most new comers to Petersburg, that we have known Englishmen leave it after a few days' residence, from the effect the water had on their constitution.

At this time, before the Angarà freezes, the cold is more sensible at Irkutsk than at any other season. The exhalations, which form into a fog, become frozen, and prick the face like so many innumerable small points, so that 25° then are more intolerable than 38° afterwards,—the maximum of the cold here, and that but very seldom. The air is then serene, without wind or fog. As we have said before, close to its source the

river is immensely rapid, and near the town, between fifty and sixty feet deep, so that to row against the stream is impossible; a boat of any size can only be towed along by men or horses, and a small light skiff may be punted by keeping close to shore, where bottom is to be found. The bed of the river is full of large stones, which have fallen from the adjacent rocks, and as these attach themselves occasionally to the masses of ice, they have an idea at Irkutsk, contrary to all common sense, that the Angarà freezes first from the bottom, and not from the surface, a thing, of course, impossible. There are some of the smaller rivers to the north of Siberia which freeze completely through to their bed, so that if a hole is made in the ice, no water is found; but the Angarà is, of course, far too deep for that to be the case here. The thickness of the ice in the Baikal is not above six feet. When the thaw takes place, precociously as it does, the floods are excessive, owing to the river below not being thawed so soon; the masses of floating ice being stopped by the solid surface, the water rises above them, and causes a flood in the depth of winter as it were, for the rivers are still frozen; the effect produced, in other places, by the heat of the sun in the spring.

The Baikal, on many accounts, is one of the most extraordinary lakes in the world. It is situated between 51° and 56° north latitude, and 104° and 111° east longitude. Very narrow in proportion to its length, it varies from thirty to a hundred versts in width, and is six hundred long. Surrounded almost entirely by very high and precipitous rocks, it seems clearly to have been formed by some sudden convulsion

of nature, which has opened a passage through them. The mass of water brought into it every year by the many rivers which empty themselves into it, and the mountain torrents that descend direct from the rocks which come close down to the water's edge, is said to be ten times greater than that which can be poured off by the Angarà, its only outlet, and yet no considerable rise takes place in the lake. To the natives it is known by the name of the Holy Sea, and a thousand superstitions that belong to it, make it in their eyes an object of respect, not to say fear, for the navigation is of a very dangerous and tedious description; and they think if it did not receive its proper name, it would be angry and shipwreck them. It is subject, even more than lakes in general, to sudden squalls, which coming with great impetuosity, capsize in an instant a boat that has got much sail set, and as the merchant vessels for Kiakhta and Nertchynsk are flat-bottomed, without a keel, and have only one large sail at the poop, the danger for them is great, and the risk calculated in the price at which the merchants trade for the different goods. The rate of sailing is slow in the extreme, because as they can only go with a wind directly fair for them, they often have to wait for this a long time, and even the galiots of the admiralty are not unfrequently capsized, and sometimes have been known to be seventeen days in getting across.

The depth of the lake is immense, but it has never been regularly fathomed by officers of the navy. It has been stated in a Russian periodical to be found in two places, between the point where the Angarà issues from it, and the Selenga runs into it, a distance of a

hundred and thirty-two versts, to vary from four hundred and fifty to five hundred toises, but it appears impossible that this should be correct, as it is difficult to sound to that depth. It is said that a governor of Irkutsk attempted it many years ago with a line of a thousand fathom, and that they did not find bottom, but the lead, probably, did not sink. Near the mouth of the Angarà where the galiot of the admiralty is at anchor, Mr. de Hedenström let down the lead in 1832. On one side the vessel the water was perfectly clear, and the anchor was visible in fifteen fathom water, on the other side it was dark-coloured and thick, and seventy-two fathom water. There are, consequently, few parts of it where a vessel can touch, owing to the want of anchorage, and the abruptness of the rocks. In spite of this, with the important commerce which is carried on over its surface, the government has not even established a few steamers to tow over the merchant vessels, and from the conversation we had with the Governor-general on the subject, it does not seem as if it is inclined to do so. The expense they say would be very heavy, the season short when they could ply, the engineers, who must be foreigners, would necessarily be paid for the whole year, and the loss to the owners of the vessels who carry over the merchandize, serious. A few prejudices, and a few interests to be got over, in short, and for this, one of the most useful works that government could undertake is allowed to be neglected year after year. There is coal in the immediate neighbourhood, and of course, any quantity of wood that might be required, and a steamer might land the cargoes within a short distance

of Kiakhta, and thus the land journey for prisoners going to the mines of Nertchynsk, and for the produce of the mines to be brought back, would be very considerably shortened. The expense we should think would willingly be paid by the merchants for the increased security and rapidity of conveyance that they would acquire by it.

Added to the danger to which the navigation of the Baikal is subject from the frequency of squalls, and difficulty of finding bottom to cast anchor, it appears as if some volcanic agency were constantly at work below the surface of the water, which increases it in no inconsiderable degree. The waves are extremely irregular, and sometimes reach an extraordinary height, but it is remarked that this is not the case, when a strong wind blows for a length of time, which would naturally be expected to produce such an effect. At other times when the lake is perfectly calm, in particular spots a violent sea gets up, and the waves break mountains high, while at a very short distance on each side of this swell the water is perfectly unruffled. These phenomena, apparently independent of any ordinary causes, can only be attributable to some hidden power, which acts under the water, and may be possibly produced by a sudden rush of air, occasioned by the dissolution of gaseous substances in the submarine laboratory. The form of the mountains which surround the lake shows pretty clearly that an earthquake or volcanic action has originally given birth to the receptacle of this mass of water. The rocks seem to have been cut off so perpendicularly at the edge of the present lake, as could only have happened from some

such violent and sudden cause. Traces of extinct volcanoes, and numerous hot springs in its neighbourhood, as well as actual masses of very ancient lava which have been found, leave no doubt of the nature of the under soil. Thousands of years perhaps have elapsed since these vast revolutions took place, they are, probably, still going on continually in a minor degree, but the magnificence of the pine forests attests that vegetation has been flourishing there for many centuries. Slight shocks of earthquakes are felt every year in the neighbourhood.

The bed of the lake must be of an unusual nature to receive and absorb the quantities of water which are annually poured into it, and which never make any sensible difference in its height, be they more or less. It never overflows its banks, and its greatest height instead of being in spring on the melting of the snows, is in autumn, when there is a variation of from seven to fourteen inches, but not more. Fogs are constant upon it even in summer, which makes it always cold, and, doubtless, a certain quantity of water is carried off by evaporation, but that is insufficient, comparing it with other similar waters, to account for the level being so regularly kept. In the summer of the year 1818, the water rose suddenly above six feet, and remained so for a considerable time without any apparent cause, since which the level of the lake is known to be a little higher than it was before that year, from a tongue of land or sandbank there is which separates the Baikal from the bay of the monastery Possolsk, and extends nine versts up to the junction of the bay with the lake, where is the little harbour of Prorva,

the most secure place for vessels to lie at anchor in, in the Baikal. Contemporaneously with this sudden rising of the lake, a small river, Iréte, distant from it in a straight line a hundred and twenty versts to the north-west, suddenly overflowed its banks. The source of this river is at the foot of a mountain, and is immediately of a considerable size; its inundation was subterranean and instantaneous, the waters pouring out in great bodies from the source itself. It is possible that a communication may exist between the two by subterrean channels, some of which had been stopped up, and the water not finding its usual exit, raised the level of the lake, as well as river, from the same reason. In a summer of great drought, an extraordinary rising of the Léna took place some years ago in the same manner, which destroyed all the hay of the poor people who inhabited its banks. These sudden and unaccountable elevations of the water threaten to be some day fatal to the town of Irkutsk; the passage of the Angarà through the narrow valley would by any increase in the volume of its waters be necessarily too narrow to contain them, and all the vicinity would as certainly be inundated, and probably every vestige of living creatures be swept away.

The most frequent winds on the lake are those which blow from one extremity of it to the other, north-east and east, or south-west and west. The north-west is the most constant and dangerous. The highest mountains that surround the lake are on the south and south-east, and yet, strange to say, the winds from that quarter are rare, and by no means formidable. It has been imagined that a hidden communication

exists between the Baikal and the sea, but the level of the lake is about two thousand feet higher than that of the sea, and the distance, about three thousand versts, is almost too great to allow of that possibility. A number of seals of the same sort as those found in the northern seas, are killed every year in it; sea salmon and sponge, as well as coral, which is found only in salt water, tend to strengthen the idea of some connexion with the ocean. This, if not a probable hypothesis, is at least as much so as that of Pallas and his fellow traveller Géorgi, who thought at some remote period it formed a part of the Northern Ocean, or that these marine productions were introduced into it by an inundation of the Léna. How the waters should have risen over mountains three thousand feet high, we cannot understand, and if the bed of the Baikal has been formed in the way we suppose, it can have had no open communication with the sea, at least since the period when perhaps the whole of Siberia was imbedded in the ocean.

The Baikal contains a much greater quantity of fish than mountain lakes generally do. The sturgeon is found in it of a very large size; the salmon also, which provide food for the inhabitants during the whole year. The omoulè (*Salmo autumnalis* of Pallas), a fish somewhat resembling the herring, one of the best sorts, when dried, we have ever eaten, is abundant here, and the seals of which we have just spoken are a valuable article of commerce with the Chinese, both for the blubber and the skins. The woods abound in wild animals of all sorts, many of them being excellent for food, and all of more or less value for the fur.

The mountains are composed of granite principally, with strata of gneiss and limestone. A little rivulet, the Sludenka, which runs at the foot of the mountains, and falls into the Baikal, contains a number of fossils, and among other things the *lapis lazuli*, almost of the same kind as that which comes from Thibet. It is not found in great masses, but in smallish pieces, which have been rounded by the action of the water which has washed them down. All the researches have been vain to find the quarry from whence they come, and though the place where they are found is not of very great extent, hitherto every attempt to trace their passage has been useless. All those we have seen are of a lighter blue than the *lapis lazuli* of Thibet, but they are said to be freer from blemish than the other. The *Baikalite*, the *prenithe*, and the *glaucolithe*, which is not unlike *lapis lazuli*, are also found here.

There are at present two roads round the Baikal to get to Kiakhta, and a third now in operation under the auspices of the government; the plan at least was proposed to the Emperor by an officer of engineers, when we were at Petersburg, and probably would receive his sanction. One would have supposed there could not be a better way of employing the criminals than on road making, but on our making this remark to General Rupert, he told us it would be necessary to treble his military force to guard them, and that would make the road rather an expensive one. We cannot see why chains should not answer the purpose as they do in other countries; as it is, a good many escape in the course of every year, and perish in the woods by hunger, or are destroyed by the animals, and yet no

road, a thing so important, is made. We would try a change of system therefore. The best of the two now in existence on all accounts, is one made about three years ago at the expense of a Kiakhta merchant, who found the loss of time by water and the old road so great, and the risk also, that he undertook to make a new one at his own cost. It does not seem, however that this one is to be permanent, at all events a job is going on to make another at the Emperor's expense, which will probably benefit the officer of engineers, who has the direction of it, more than any one else, but it will be the post road, and travellers will be sure of finding horses. At present, by the old road, a greater part of the journey must be made on horseback, owing to the mountainous country passed through, but the new one is passable the whole way in a sledge.

As far as the bay of Kultuk in the Baikal, ninety-six versts, the road is well kept up, though steep and uneven; the two roads are the same to this point, nor in fact as to distance is there any great difference between them. They reckon about seven hundred versts to Kiakhta, but the distances are very far from being exactly calculated. From Kultuk to Snénaya you pay for a hundred and four versts, the object of the person who made the road being to make the distance appear as short as possible; it has been latterly measured again, and found to be a hundred and forty, but still only a hundred and four are paid for. Without detailing this most irksome of all journeys, it will be sufficient to say, that it is probably the very worst road in the whole Russian Empire. Across the mountains, which are in some places of a great elevation, the roads

are made in *zig-zags*, as on the Alps, and supported with wooden walls instead of granite ones, which are constantly requiring repair, and are a very heavy tax to the Burates of the neighbourhood, who are bound to keep them in some sort of order without any remuneration. The Khamardoban, the highest of these, is extremely steep, and the expense of making a passage over it of tolerably easy ascent would be certainly very great. The present road is made according to the direction of the numerous mountain streams and rivers, which, though not deep, are very rapid, and will require a vast number of solid bridges to make the crossing them safe. The whole is a succession of ravines, which are the beds of these streams, mountains, rivers, and valleys again, with wooden walls at every ten paces. The Burates are said to know a better and shorter line of road, but they hold their tongues about it, either because they do not wish to have so many travellers passing by their habitations, or that the places by which it would lead are their favourite spots for squirrels and sables, who would be driven away by the frequent traffic which would take place, or because they do not want to have to make the road for nothing. All good reasons truly for holding their tongues.

Before reaching Verkhne-Udinsk the country becomes flat and cultivated, but the Selenga, on whose right bank this town stands, is again overhung by high conical rocks, which appear to have received their present form, as well as those which inclose the Baikal, from some convulsion of nature. Verkhne-Udinsk is one of the most important towns on that side Irkutsk, and contains a number of good-looking buildings,

several churches, and is the residence of the various *chinovniks* who have the arrangement of all minor matters in the district, the collection of the *yassak* from the Burates, the redress of grievances, which consists in taking a bribe from both parties, the inspection of the roads, and, in short, all local affairs. Formerly Selenginsk, a hundred versts higher up the river, was the *chef lieu* of the district; but now it has ceased to be a town, and its honours are transferred to its rival. There is a strong garrison kept here, and considerable trade is carried on with the Burates, those in the immediate neighbourhood being the richest of the whole tribe.

The number of the inhabitants of this district is very considerable; it is calculated at sixty thousand. They are composed partly of free crown peasants, Burates, and Tonguses, and the exiles who are scattered about in the different villages. In this part the Burates are much occupied in agriculture, partly from necessity in the first instance, and now because they find their advantage in so doing.

Of the crown peasants, one portion consists of *Roskolniks*, of whom we have spoken in the beginning of these pages; they are in number eight thousand, and are among the most wealthy and respectable of all the subjects of his Imperial Majesty. Their ancestors, in the time of the Empress Catherine, were sent here to colonize, and having been given in charge to a zealously orthodox officer, who detested heresy, he assigned them lands in the woods and mountains, with the humane intention of making their prospects as hopeless as possible. By dint of great industry and

labour, they cut down the forests, and their property is now the best farmed, and the most productive, in the government of Irkutsk. Their villages are remarkably well built, and their houses as neat and clean as those of the Cossacks on the southern frontier of West Siberia. They are still as scrupulous in their religious observances as their forefathers. Most of the villages have their *popes* (clergymen), who are deserters from some monastery in Russia, and they do not procure them a passport, from an idea that by living in a state of concealment, and to a certain degree, of danger, they bear a closer resemblance to the Apostles, their predecessors. When one of them dies, deputies are sent into Russia to the monasteries belonging to the sectaries, to bring back a new one. This journey, and their present to the monasteries, is said to cost them thirty thousand roubles. The deputies, as well as the *pope*, must not travel with a passport, and when he arrives, he is put into a place of concealment and security, under a good guard. There are some villages inhabited by a sect who do not admit any *popes*, who only go into a church when they marry, in order that their marriage may be legal, and the wife not have the right to run away from them. Instead of a *pope*, they have an Ancient, who reads their prayers, and is conversant with the Scriptures. Their original number was very small; but from the sober, respectable life they lead, they have increased in a ratio, perhaps, unparalleled in Russia, a proof that neither the climate, nor the food, nor any other cause, in fact, can be assigned for the non-increase of the population in Siberia, but their reckless and debauched mode of

life. Their dress, food, and especially their personal appearance, is greatly superior to that of any other of the neighbouring people.

Besides these there is about an equal number of descendants of the Russians, who, on the first report of the conquest of Siberia, came and settled themselves here, and intermarried with the women of the Burates, who they expelled from their homes. These have been joined by descendants of exiles, who became free after the term of their sentence was completed, and form a numerous colony. Their countenances and dark hair show the admixture of Tatar blood in their veins. Their mode of life, dress, and food, have, however, much more similarity to those of the Burates, than their Russian neighbours. They occupy themselves a good deal in fishing and hunting, and less in agriculture, though their lands are much better than those of the Sectaries. They live a great deal on the brick tea, which, of all mixtures, is certainly the most nauseous. They purchase it at Kiakhta; it is made of the coarsest leaves and small boughs, pressed together into a thing the shape and size of a brick. This they pound in a mortar and boil, mixing with it a little salt, to give it a flavour, and some butter, or grease, to make it slip down the throat; sometimes a little milk and rye-flour is added, and then it is a dish worthy of a *Taysha*.

The Burates, who are called here *Bratski*, are a very numerous tribe, and are divided into four races. That of Khorynsk, consisting of twenty-two thousand; that of Selenginsk, sixteen thousand,—of these a part do Cossack duty; that of Khondarynsk, two thousand; that of Bargusine, about the same number. These

last are the most comfortable of all the different *oulous*. They inhabit the vicinity of the river Bargusine, and have an unlimited extent of land to cultivate. None among them are rich, nor have they any poor, a golden mediocrity, owing, it is said, to their being governed by Ancients, who are too simple, and uncivilized as yet, to be ambitious. With their Mongolese descent they have brought some of their customs, and one which is very advantageous, that of watering their lands by means of artificial canals, of which traces of great numbers, made in ancient times, are visible in all directions, a proof that these Steppes had once a much more numerous population, and one far advanced in the science of agriculture. From any small rivulet they make a number of grips, which are stopped up till the land requires watering, when they let them off, and never fail to have good crops both of hay and corn, so that in this soil, which is gravelly, in a season of drought the land is more productive than that of their neighbours, whose soil is much better.

All the Burates are more or less Nomades, as they keep a great quantity of cattle, and change their residence in order to get fresh pasture for their flocks. This they do in spring, summer, and the beginning of winter. Some of them inhabit *yourtes* of felt, such as we described those of the Kirghis, others wooden huts of a very primitive order. They are governed by *Tayshas* elected for life by the people, and confirmed by the Russian government *durante bene placito*. They have other officers under them called *choulengas* and *Zaysans*, who are free from the *yassak*, which the people pay for them. The *Taysha* receives his orders

from the police of the district, which he sends to his *chancellerie* to be executed by the subalterns. Their administration is naturally similar to that of the Russian peasants, except the election being popular and for life, and that they have the right of taxing the people arbitrarily without there being any appeal against their *fiat*. This produces a vast deal of oppression, the *Tayshas* acquire a rank from the Russian authorities, their pretensions are increased, the taxes are unequally levied in order to receive gratuities from those who are favoured, and the same thing occurs in the distribution of their lands, so that all the iniquitous system of Russian abuses and corruptions is introduced among these simple people.

Some few years ago one of the *Tayshas* of the Burates who inhabit the Isle of Olkhone in the Baikal, was convicted of a robbery, a thing not common among them, and punished by the Russian authorities. A merchant who was passing by with some goods for Kiakhta was waylaid, robbed and murdered, by this worthy and some accomplices; he was soon discovered, knouted, and sent for his life to the salt mines of Okhotsk with his abettors. Of these, every one made his escape in a short time, and came back to his old residence, the *Taysha*, alone, remained and died there, although he had had the same opportunity of escaping as the others. In these times (this happened thirty years ago) the crime of murder was punished by having the nostrils torn out with hot pincers, an operation which, though not strictly speaking agreeable, is not to be compared to the pain of half a dozen blows with the knout. This has been long since abolished, and it

is considered in Siberia, by many, that this act of humanity was productive of much evil, as it stamped an indelible mark upon the culprit by which he could be for ever recognised, that branded him with ignominy, and prevented him ever making his escape from his place of exile. This it was in fact which prevented the *Taysha*, in question, from returning to his home; he was sure to be informed against by his successor, who might be jealous of his recovering his authority, or some one else to whom he had done an injustice; and the internal rage he felt at the impossibility of concealing his shame, prompted him to die in exile rather than escape like his companions. Crime has increased to a notorious extent since that fatal mark has been abolished; the convicted felon is now merely branded on the forehead with a hot iron, of which all trace can easily be removed in a few days by the application of three slices of garlic on the three letters. In the other case the criminal could literally not show his nose, without being recognised, and all attempt at escape was, therefore, hopeless. An outcry is raised when the knout is talked of, but not a word in pity for the poor wretches who are barbarously murdered by these ruffians in the way we have before described.

Gmèlin and Pallas have described the tombs of the ancient race who possessed these Steppes of the Burates at a very distant period, but there is in the neighbourhood of the salt mines of Selenginsk a monumental pillar of those of the olden time, which we believe has not been noticed by any writer. It is placed near the *gousynoyè* or lake of geese, and is of a single block of granite rounded, twelve feet high and a

great part of it buried in the ground. At the top is the face of a man in *basso relievo*, and on the two sides two oval figures as ornaments, also in *basso relievo*. Though of ancient workmanship, it is far from being of a rude description, and was evidently the work of a people who had made considerable progress in the arts of civilization. As a Russian curiosity it would be worth sending to the museum at Petersburg. The Chinese annals, according to De Guignes, make mention of a people who inhabited these parts in the ninth century, and had expelled from them a tribe of Huns. Fragments of bronze arrows and axes have been also found hereabouts, probably of an earlier date even, before the use of iron was introduced. The remains of articles of the same kind in *jade*, of which we have spoken before, were also found at a little distance from Irkutsk, in a chalk pit, on a mountain, thirty feet below the surface. A little research would, probably, bring to light many curiosities in this virgin soil to antiquarians, as many valuable objects were found by the Russians when they first took possession of the country in the tombs of the Aborigines.

The Burates of Selenginsk and Khorynsk profess the religion of Budha, the others still adhere to Shamanism. The clergy of the former religion, however absurd many of its tenets may be, are represented as a most exemplary and useful class of persons. Uniting as they do the cure of the body to that of the souls of their congregations, they are an invaluable blessing to the poor people, and even the Russians are indebted to them for medical assistance. Their little knowledge of simples is derived from Thibetan and Chinese works,

and they often purchase at Mai-Ma-chin, the drugs which they require, without having any acquaintance with them except by name.

These countries are very subject to infectious disorders, and especially the measles, which a few years ago made great ravages among the Russians, but very little among the Burates. Their mode of treating them is a singular one. They pour cold water in which a little milk is mixed, over the naked body of the patient, till shivering comes on, they then wrap him in their pelisses of sheep-skin, and make him as warm as possible, which causes the irruption to throw itself out, as fully as is requisite, and in this way the Lamas had great success in curing the complaint. They are very active also in vaccinating the children, and in one year when the Siberian plague was very destructive here, they were of the greatest assistance to the officers of the district. This disease is prevalent in various parts of Siberia from time to time, and was raging in that part of it through which Messrs. Humboldt and Rose travelled, in 1829, and was the cause of considerable loss to the scientific world, inasmuch as these gentlemen were persuaded that it was very contagious, and hurried through the district where it was, without holding any intercourse with the inhabitants, so that they probably could not fail to miss many objects of interest, connected with the natural history of the country. They certainly do put the cattle into quarantine for it, but though epidemic, according to the best authority, that of Dr. Albert, who studied it for eighteen years at Tobolsk, it does not seem to be a contagious disorder. Like cholera, it does not attack all the places in the

same vicinity. This German physician believed it to be produced by the exhalations from marshy lowlands, and by some it has been thought to be communicated by very small insects invisible to the naked eye. We confess this to be our idea of cholera also, and we have seen as much of it as most people, as well as that it is not of a contagious nature.

If not speedily attended to, however, it is often fatal, and especially to the cattle and horses. It manifests itself both in man and animals by a small pustule or *bubo*, which has at first the appearance of a gnat-bite, but increases rapidly in size, and becomes violently inflamed, hard, and cartilaginous. The remedy for men, which generally succeeds, is to open the abscess, and rub into it *sal ammoniac*, powdered chalk and tobacco mixed together, but for horses this is of no effect whatever. In them it generally shows itself on the stomach, and an eye-witness informed us of the case of one so attacked, who was treated in the way described above, and was instantly relieved, and began in a few minutes to eat his grass as usual. A quarter of an hour afterwards the poison had communicated itself to the external vein of the stomach, which produced a strongly increased pulsation all the way up to the chest, and the animal fell dead without any farther signs of suffering or disease. In all cases where dissection of the bodies took place, the internal organs were all strongly affected.

Corrosive sublimate applied to the abscess in this manner appears to have been the only efficacious remedy—it produces an abundant suppuration, and seems to give considerable pain to the horse, but in ten

days it almost always cures them. The difficulty of obtaining supplies of mercury and the expense of it in those countries, make it very desirable that some more common specific, and one easier of attainment, should be discovered for this most fatal disorder, in districts where every one almost looks to his flocks and herds, as his principal means of existence. As a preservative against it, they give in some places aconite to the horses in the spring, and imagine it has the effect of keeping off the complaint.

It is more general in West than East Siberia; it formerly broke out in the marshy lands in the district of Tara, and taking an eastern direction spread as far as Tomsk, where it stopped. Since 1833, or 1834, it has travelled by a different route, coming from the south, and following the course of the rivers towards the north (like the cholera) till it reached the government of Tobolsk, and the country about Narym. At this latter place it made frightful ravages, never having previously attacked it, or in a very slight degree. A sort of small locust, which is often most destructive to the crops in Siberia if proper precautions are not taken to destroy them, took the same direction as the plague at the same time, in the districts of Barnaoul, Kolyvàn, &c., where they previously showed themselves, taking a line of march from west to east; since that time they have also gone from south to north.

The religion of Budha is one which has existed for a long series of years, and been professed from the shores of the ocean to the Imaus, in a great part of central Asia, China, and Thibet, and is believed to have originated in India; at what period it was introduced

into Mongolia is not satisfactorily ascertained. Of all eastern professions of faith it is the most remarkable, from the nature of its doctrines, its mythology, and we may add the morality of its precepts. It appears to have a considerable resemblance with what we may suppose to have been the religion of the ancient Egyptians, that is, the essence, as understood by the priests, and those initiated in the higher order of mysteries, not in the popular superstitions and absurdities, which they considered sufficient for the vulgar herd. Its basis is the belief in the existence of One Supreme Being, of whom the different attributes are represented in a variety of forms. It teaches the doctrine of the immortality of the soul with that of the metempsychosis, and that eternal happiness or misery will be the portion of all according to the way they have lived on earth. The ideas it conveys of eternity are subtle and metaphysical, though full of the wildest allegories and absurdities*. Its precepts are strictly moral, and the catalogue of mortal and venial sins immense.

The priesthood, which consists of several classes, and is a very numerous body, receives more consideration and respect than in any religion we know of. A Lama cannot err, according to their holy books, and the object of every pious follower of Budha should be to please him in every possible manner. Timkowski gives the following translation of a part of one of these

* The Supreme Being in their metaphysical view of him is space, which contains in it the germs of future brings. Existence is only an illusion of the senses. The great spirit is in a state of repose, while all others are gradually changing and throwing off their materiality, and reunite when this work of purification is completed.

holy books. "You will attain the highest wisdom if you honour the Lamas; the sun itself, which dispels impenetrable mists, rises *only* that honour may be rendered to the Lamas; the most enormous sins obtain pardon by showing respect to the learned Lamas. By glorifying the grand Lama, you incline the Bourkhans and the Bodisadou (divine emanations) to diffuse blessings and avert evils. The benediction of the grand Lama gives bodily strength, communicates great advantages to youth, and confers glory. If you sincerely implore, during a whole day, the benediction of a Lama, all the sins committed during innumerable generations are effaced; a man then becomes a Bourkhan. On the contrary, if we render ourselves unworthy of such a favour, we become the prey of hell. Any offence to a Lama annihilates the merit acquired by a thousand generations. Whosoever shows any contempt for the holiness of the Lamas is punished by accidents, sickness, and all kinds of misfortunes. If any one turns into ridicule the precepts of the Lama, he is punished by impediment in his speech, giddiness, and death. Ridiculing the soul of the Lama leads to possession by the devil, loss of reason and memory, and banishment into the place of eternal torment. This derision is the greatest of all sins. He who is guilty of it will never have rest; neither his body, nor his tongue, nor his soul will enjoy the least tranquillity. He who succeeds in correcting himself of this vice, may hope to escape the fate which awaits him. If he succeeds in overcoming this evil propensity, by acknowledging it to be the most hurtful of all evils, he is certain of subduing his enemies. It is for this reason that the holy books

order us to pray, and to honour the Dalai Lama with indefatigable perseverance."

The Dalai Lama is their high priest, the object of their highest veneration, but a mortal. After his decease, he re-appears in human form, generally in that of a young child, whom he has designated, and described in what part of the world he is to be found, just before his death. The corpse of the deceased is treated with the highest respect, but never allowed to be seen again; their first care then is to go to the spot where the successor is to be found, and when the marks of resemblance are sufficiently identifiable, he is taken to the residence in Thibet, examined as to some points of doctrine, and installed in his high office. His youth is, of course, spent in learning from the priests the mysteries of the religion, of which he is the living head and type, and in studying the sacred books. The Bantchan is the second incarnation in point of rank, and in some parts even has the pre-eminence; the same ceremonies occur at his demise, and they mutually give their benediction to the new representative of the divinity.

Next to these are the Koutouktous, who are the vicegerents of the other two pontiffs; there are many of them, who reside in different parts of Mongolia, China, Thibet, &c.; they are highly respected, and supposed to return immediately after death to the body of some young and handsome person.

The priests are obliged to observe the strictest celibacy; they are a very numerous body, and every Mongolian brings up one of his sons to the priesthood; they rise through various gradations of purifica-

tion to a state of regeneration, which leaves them nothing more to be desired. The ceremonies in their temples, and the adoration of images, are so similar to those of the Roman Catholic religion, that Sir George Staunton, in his account of the embassy to Peking, says the missionaries imagined they must have got a glimpse of Christianity from the Nestorians, by way of Tatary. We have before alluded to the introduction of Christianity in the ninth century among these nations; after which the Mongols conquered them, and ingrafted Mahometanism upon it. It is not improbable that they, in turn, should have learned some of the doctrines and ceremonies of the nations they conquered, and thus have preserved, unknowingly, the practice and precepts of a religion they despise and disregard.

As the dependence of the Lamas on a Koutouktou resident out of the Russian dominions, did not suit the notions of the Russian government, it has established a sort of bishop among the Lamas, called a Khamba Lama, who should have the same authority as the Koutouktou in Mongolia, and the power of conferring the priesthood, without the candidates being obliged to go to Ourga, two hundred and sixty versts beyond Kiakhta, where he resides, to receive ordination. The Khamba Lama is elected by the other Lamas and the *Tayshas*, and his nomination is guaranteed by the local government, but he is subordinate to the district police. This is a considerable falling off from the dignity of a Koutouktou; but they are all better satisfied with the new arrangement. The rest of the tribes are still professors of Shamanism, the most

ignoble of all religions, and not worthy of being dignified with such a name, having neither clergy, places of worship, or morality to recommend it.

From Verkhne-Udinsk to Selenginsk are a hundred versts, following the left bank of the river. The scenery is fine, and the valleys well cultivated. There is still a fortress and garrison at Selenginsk; but it is no longer called a town. The situation of Verkhne-Udinsk is in every way more convenient, and the encroachments of the river make the former an insecure residence. Two English missionaries, Messrs. Swan and Stallybrass, had been established here for three and twenty years, but were unfortunately just on the point of leaving it, in consequence of an order from St. Petersburg. Captain Cochrane lived two or three days with them in the early part of their career, when they had only been three years at Selenginsk, and he seems to have formed, twenty years ago, a pretty accurate judgment of what would be the effect of their labours. He says, that up to that time, with the most unremitting efforts, they had not made *one single* convert. "Nor is it probable that they will," continues he, "because the Burates had only just received thirty waggon loads of religious books from Thibet, at an enormous expense, that their faith is of too old a date, and they too obstinate to change it. It is preposterous to suppose that three strangers (they were then three) should upset a religion, whose professors can read and write its doctrines, although a few, for the sake of money, may pretend to become Christians." This is almost the state of the case after three and twenty years.

That they have been as active and devoted to their duties as men could be, there can be no doubt, and that they have been exemplary and useful in other ways every one from Irkutsk to Nertchynsk admits, but their own account is, that they cannot flatter themselves with thinking they have made half-a-dozen real converts during their whole career. They had a printing press established at Selenginsk, and having learned the Russian, Mongolese, and Thibetan languages, they have circulated the Scriptures in each of these languages in great numbers. But *that* it appears is almost the only result of twenty-three years' labour and banishment. Their establishment was exceedingly comfortable; they were, in the first instance, patronized strongly by the late Emperor Alexander, who built them houses, and gave them grants of lands, and they were so completely domesticated there, that we believe no child ever felt a greater pang in being torn for the first time from his mother's side, than these worthy men did in leaving Siberia. They were in Moscow and Petersburg during the same time as ourselves, and we would gladly have done anything in our power to assist them, and as we went to Moscow with the Governor-general, who they imagined to be the cause of their being sent away, we hoped to have been of service, but it was too late.

The General is himself a Protestant, and in every way disposed to lend a favourable ear to them, but the complaint made against them by the Bishop of the diocese was, that they were not content with failing to convert the Burates themselves, but endeavoured to persuade them not to be baptized by the Russians,

whom they represented as idolaters, as much as themselves. If this was the case, and this was the statement laid before the synod at Petersburg, from whom their sentence of expulsion emanated, they could not complain of their fate. We can hardly understand what other possible motive could exist for wishing to get rid of them, than the one assigned, and as enthusiasts have generally more zeal than discretion, it is likely there was some foundation for the charge made against them. They could not, we believe, assign themselves any reason for their dismissal. The Governor-general was only the instrument employed to signify to them the order for their departure, which came from Petersburg. He charged us, however, to negociate with them for the purchase of their printing machine, which he wished to keep at Irkutsk, and which it would be an immense expense to them to remove out of Russia, but nothing was done about it.

The Russians, clergy or laymen, are, without any exception, the most tolerant people as regards religious opinions, of any we have ever met with in Europe. We do not mean to say, that the dogmas of the Greek Church are a whit more so than the Roman Catholic ones, but its professors are so in practice. Never did we hear any observations made on the subject of a man's faith in any part of the empire, and in discussing the tenets of the different churches, the only one against which there seems to be any bitterness is the Roman Catholic, because they have seceded from it perhaps, or the Roman Catholics more properly from them. Our missionaries, therefore, having been tolerated and even encouraged for three and twenty years,

we must confess we think the fault lay with themselves, that this toleration has ceased.

Wherever their field of action may lie for the future, it can hardly be in a more unfruitful soil than the one they have left, and whatever their errors in judgment may have been, no one can refuse them the greatest praise for having continued with a perseverance deserving a better result, to fight against so many difficulties, for so many years, with so little success. Their acquaintance with the Mongolese and Chinese dialects will enable them to continue their pious work in those countries, to which an opening may very probably be made of a permanent nature at no very distant period.

The Russian government, with whatever object, are clearly most anxious to unite all their subjects under one form of religious worship; they would consequently feel more than ordinary resentment against any set of men who could be supposed to thwart their intentions. It is at least a great state engine, and the recent abolition of the religious establishments, with a view to connect the clergy more closely with the state, is intended to extend its power, quite as much as it is one of a financial nature. That it is a wise measure in both respects we are convinced, and we hope to see the day when something of the same sort may be brought about with our own Catholic neighbours in the sister kingdom.

CHAPTER IX.

Baths of Tourka.—Lama Priests, Physicians.—From Verkhne-Udinsk to Kiakhta.—Troitsko Sauski.—Treaty with Chinese in 1728.—Description of the Fortress.—Timbowski.—Distance to Peking.—Tea Trade.—Douane of Kiakhta.—Trade with Chinese in general.—Against the Russians.—Alterations proposed.—Mai-ma-tchin.—Description of it.—No Chinese Women allowed there.—Chinese Dinners.—Dzar-gou-tchai.—Curious Antiquity on Yénisséi River.—Nertchynsk.—Yablonnoi Mountains.—Crown Peasants.—Mines.—Criminals.—Produce of Iron and Lead Foundries.—Wild Animals.—Inhabitants.—Yakut Horses.—Fond of Racing.—Obláva.—Traffic with Okhotsk.—Mode of crossing the Baikal on the Ice.

At about two hundred versts from Verkhne-Udinsk are the hot wells of Tourka, only two or three versts from the eastern extremity of the Baikal. Nine versts before reaching them, you cross the river Tourka, which falls into the lake, and in a thick forest, through which a road has been made, the baths are situated. They are strongly sulphureous, and the heat is as great as 48° of Réaumur. Their virtues are most celebrated in this country, as specific remedies, for a variety of complaints, and in March and April, and again later in summer, they are much frequented. There is no good medical advice to be obtained there, however, the plan being for every patient to inscribe in a large journal, kept for the purpose, the nature of his complaints, the remedies he took, and the success that attended them, so that every new-comer has a prospect of profiting, at least, by some of his predecessors' experience. One medical man, of considerable

reputation in Russia as a chymist, has frequented them the last few years, and he has probably given to the public some explanation of the qualities of the water, and their effects. It is quite clear, but has all the nauseous smell and taste of Harrowgate water, though the visitors use it for tea, and when boiled, it has no disagreeable flavour.

The Lamas, who, as we have mentioned, are corporally, as well as spiritually, the physicians of their flocks, have a superstition about the use of these baths, as they have, indeed, about most things; and a celebrated cure of a Burate is recorded, the fact of the cure being undoubted, the time it required being the point most insisted on. The idea is that the cure must be effected in neither more nor less than twenty-one days, and that, if it has not taken place in that time, it must be given up till the following year. A Burate was brought there a few years ago, who had so completely lost the use of his limbs, as not to be able to sit on horseback; he was carried by his friends to the baths, and twice a day put into them as hot as he could bear them, and left there till he fainted. He was then plunged into the snow, and entirely covered with it from head to foot; when he came to himself again, and naturally shivered violently, they placed him in a room made exceedingly hot, and wrapped him in pelisses till he perspired freely. At the end of a week he could walk to the bath without assistance, and on the twenty-first day rode away perfectly cured. There are several cold water springs as well as the hot ones, and the system adopted seems to be on the same principle as that at Gräffenberg. In the environs of the Baikal

there are a great number of other hot springs, and a chymical analysis would probably discover as many different qualities of water, as are found between Ems and Marienbad or Franzenbad.

From Verkhne-Udinsk to Kiakhta the road follows the river Selenga a hundred and twenty-six versts on its left bank, through a Steppes of a better and less sandy soil than is the character of a great deal of the land in the neighbourhood. A few versts below the town of Selenginsk, the river is crossed, from which point the nature of the soil changes completely, and is sandy and mountainous. The last post from Lipofsk, eighteen versts, is exceedingly tedious, from having three mountains to cross in deep sand, not unlike what we met with in the relay which took us to Semipolatinsk.

The fortress of Troitsko Sauski, a neat, well built town, on the banks of the little river, or rather brook, of Kiakhta, is four versts on the western side of the well-known frontier of the Russian and Chinese empires. The fortress is not much advanced, nor is it probable it will increase much from what it was at its establishment by the treaty of 1728. By this it was stipulated that a church should be built for the Russian service to be performed in, and no mention being made of a permission to build other substantial houses, none but the usual wooden ones of the country exist. Its situation, in a narrow valley, surrounded by high mountains, is unfavourable, both for the inhabitants and for trade; and the fact of the treaty being entered into, under the restraint of a Chinese army, ready to enforce the provisions their plenipotentiaries insisted

on, as well as the terms of inferiority in which China speaks invariably of Russia, prove that a free choice was not given to the Count Ssava Wladislavich Ragusinski, either in the articles of the treaty itself, as to the boundaries of the two empires, or more than all, in the place to be selected as the depôt for their commerce and exchange of merchandise. The fortress contains about five thousand inhabitants, many of them rich merchants from various parts of Russia, all the officers of government, the director of the *douane*, an important and valuable employment, and some military and civil functionaries. No town in Russia, perhaps, has so few churches in proportion to the number of its inhabitants.

The name of Kiakhta is derived from the Mongol word *Kia*, signifying the *Triticum repens*, which grows abundantly in the neighbourhood. The soil is, however, not generally productive, although on the Chinese side of the Kiakhta there are a number of gardens, which they water by means of small sluices, fastened by wooden pegs, which they pull out, and irrigate their crops with the water of the brook of partition, which may be stepped over on foot. Columns were placed a little distance off on the two sides of it, formed of a block of granite, eighteen feet high, to mark the respective boundaries, and these will stand, probably, long after the event they commemorate shall have ceased to be scrupulously respected.

The cold in winter is great here, Kiakhta being two thousand four hundred feet above the level of the sea, and consequently considerably higher than the Baikal, and the towns in the Hartz mountains and

Swiss Alps. A little beyond, on the Chinese side, flows the little river Bura, near which the treaty was made, Kiakhta not being yet in existence. Every article of life is brought from a distance, water even being procured from a spring on the Chinese side. A strong garrison of regulars and Cossacks is kept up, and the commandant, who has the inspection of all affairs of minor importance, corresponds with the Governor-general at Irkutsk; all matters of commerce of greater moment are settled at Petersburg.

One of the articles of the treaty of 1728, stipulated that the Russian government should be allowed to maintain a residence at Peking for four priests and six other persons, who should be changed every ten years; and that a church should be provided for the performance of the Greek liturgy. As many of the survivors, and the descendants of the Russian prisoners taken at Albasyne, were still in existence at Peking, this was ostensibly for their spiritual benefit; the younger members of the embassy thus appointed were to return after the expiration of ten years, and to be considered as students sent there to learn the language and customs of the Chinese. A court of embassy is there provided for them, which is kept in repair by the Chinese, and the monastery and church for the priests, at the expense of Russia. Whether the archives of Petersburg contain any hidden information concerning the statistics, and real condition of the Celestial Empire, of a less vague description than has been communicated to the public by other European travellers in that country, we know not; but no details have ever escaped from that quarter.

Timkowski published an account of his mission to Peking in 1819, but it contains nothing of any general importance, which has not been more fully given by more than one English writer of a much more recent date. It was no business of his to give any information as to the amount of trade going on between the two countries, which, however, has been very considerably increased since that time. In the summer of 1840 the embassy was changed, and we saw several persons who had been employed in different ways in making the necessary arrangements from Irkutsk and Petersburg, and from this quarter we had the first information of our occupation of the Island of Chusan, the distance to Peking being only about a thousand miles, and there being communication with Kiakhta constantly in ten days.

The fact made a great sensation there, as it was supposed the provision of tea for the fair of Nijni, this year, 1842, would fall very short in consequence, and as the whole Russian Empire is supplied by that means, the loss to individuals, as well as trade in general, will, in that event, be very great. When we left Siberia the usual quantity had not arrived, but the effect was not expected to be felt till August of 1842, so long is the time required to convey the necessary flower from the place of its growth to that of its consumption. The prices in 1841 were much higher than usual in consequence of such an event being anticipated. This might be partly because the monopolists took advantage of the panic, a thing which is done in all countries, but the fact is that the mercantile failures at Moscow, when we were there in the first months of 1841, were

most numerous, and more serious than had ever been known before. As the commerce at Kiakhta is in reality purely one of barter, if the usual imports of tea fall off, the exports of Russian produce fall off in the same proportion. A nobleman of our acquaintance, who had established only a few years a manufactory of a particular sort of cloth, destined solely for the Chinese market, told us that he had been in the habit of exporting annually to the value of six hundred thousand roubles of this material, and that up to the moment when he was speaking to us, Easter of 1841, he had not had an order for one single yard, in consequence of this shock given to commerce.

Nothing is more difficult than to arrive at anything like a satisfactory acquaintance with the amount of merchandize exchanged between the two countries. Accounts are from time to time published of particular transactions, but an authentic statement of the gross amount is difficult to obtain. It has been lately stated in the Russian Gazette, that in 1823, the weight of goods brought for barter was 130,256 puds, and that in 1837, this was increased to 203,603 puds, but no notice was taken of the description or value of the goods comprised in this immense bulk. A great proportion, undoubtedly, was tea, and from what we could gather from the most competent authorities, the value so exchanged in the last year or two may be estimated at a hundred million of roubles annually. The tax stated in the same Gazette to have been paid by Russian merchants on the imports in 1836, amounted to 11,262,603 roubles, an immense sum for custom duties at one place; and we see that by a late Ukase a revision

of duties has been made, and a new tariff is to be adopted from November, 1842. By this it seems that the duty on all manufactured goods from Europe will be considerably raised, and we have attempted to show before that by this the revenue will be a gainer. It is at the same time a practical commentary on the truth of another of Captain Jesse's statements, where he represents the Emperor to be omnipotent in everything, excepting in making any change in the tariff. We apprehend his Imperial Majesty's financiers understand figures better than the gallant captain, who says, two hundred and fifty-five roubles are seventeen pounds and ten pence, whereas, at the rate of exchange at the time of which he spoke, and at which, of course, he procured his roubles, they were exactly twelve pounds sterling. We hope his bankers did not cheat him to that extent. But the circumstances connected with the Chinese trade, especially the article of tea, one of such vital importance to all classes, are totally different, and any increase in the import duty will be severely felt, by those least able to bear an increase in the price of what is one of the necessaries of life.

In 1812, a duty of a hundred roubles *per caisse* was laid on tea, and is still in force. This is one of the reasons, added to the enormous length of the land carriage, which makes that article so costly in Russia. Every one who has drank good tea in that country (there are many inferior qualities) will admit that it is far superior to anything to be met with in any other country. This it has been said is owing to its not having been exposed to the sea air. That is, however, a fallacy; our chests of tea are hermetically sealed as it

were before they are embarked, and cannot be much, if at all, affected by that agency; but the overland tea is grown in a different part of China, and is of a superior quality. Black tea only is generally used in Russia, green tea is not much prized, and is sold at rather a cheaper rate, than the ordinary quality used in private houses. But the price is extravagant. Common good family tea costs about fifteen roubles the pound, or nearly as many shillings, while it is to be bought as high as fifty, and the small *caisses*, which are scarce even at Kiakhta, as high as a hundred. This is only used in small quantities mixed with the more common sorts; when drank alone, as we have tasted it from curiosity, it is as insipid as anything can be, and has a perfumed flowery flavour, such as cowslips or any other herb of that sort would produce. We have heard of this costly article being sent to England, as a rare *cadeau*, and used unmixed; and it was then so little esteemed that the receiver thought he had been hoaxed, so different did it turn out from what was expected, according to the high notions entertained of the famous Russian tea.

The articles of the treaty, which arranged the *minutiæ* of all the details in the mode of trading between the Russian and Chinese merchants, were so specific, that these, as well as the strict adherence of the latter to the letter of the law, and particularly their shrewdness in discovering what is favourable to themselves, are generally considered by the Russians to place them on a very unequal footing with their customers. They elect annually a certain number of merchants, who act as a board of trade under the direction of the head of the

custom-house, who arrange with the corresponding board of Chinese the price of every article to be exchanged, to which a relative value is fixed on the Chinese article. This is done in writing and is unchangeable, and no transaction ought to take place except on these terms. At first, this was scrupulously attended to, and the samples exchanged with great exactitude as to weight and quality. But though the Russian is neither very scrupulous nor easy to overreach by ordinary traders, he is not a match for the wily Chinese, particularly as circumstances are in his favour. One old trader, a German Russian, who had been all over the world, and done business with all sorts of men, amused us at the fair of Nijni with his classification of roguish dealers. The first in the order of cheats he placed the Armenians, next the Greeks, then the Chinese, then the Russians, and then a Jew. We are no judges of his distribution of the merit of knowing how to impose on others, but we have reason to think he was good authority. A story is told of a deputation of Jews coming to Peter the Great to offer him two hundred thousand ducats, for the liberty of trading in Russia; he smiled and said, "Keep your money in your pockets, for in a short time my Russians will send you out of the country without a rag to your backs." He seemed, therefore, to place his good subjects higher in the scale, than even our friend at Nijni perhaps.

As regards the mode of barter at Kiakhta, the Chinese, whose goods like other things in the Celestial Empire never vary in value, and are not subject to the fluctuations, occasioned by a thousand circumstances

in the commercial world of Europe, will never lower an iota of their demands, while the Russian, who is obliged to dispose of his merchandise *coute qui coute*, frequently suffers severely in the transaction, and if he does not take the Chinese commodities on their terms, is probably a bankrupt. Many of them have little capital, or none at all, besides the stock of goods they exchange from year to year, and many over-trade exceedingly; one of the principal causes of the ruin of merchants in more countries than one. In their dealings at the fairs of Nijni and Irbit, all is done on credit from fair to fair, *i. e.* from year to year; the consequence is, that if a merchant does not dispose of his goods at Kiakhta, and bring back a supply of other articles for the fair the following year, he cannot meet his engagements. As the prices fluctuate considerably at these great commercial *réunions* he cannot make a certain calculation beforehand of the probability of losing or gaining, so that his risk is increased; and the year we were at Nijni, though it was the largest fair ever known, we heard of a vast quantity of bills of the preceding year being carried over to the following one. The Chinese, moreover, are excessively active and cunning in finding out exactly the prices of European articles, and whether there is a great demand for particular sorts of goods which they have to sell, and what the quantity is in the market of those they want to buy. Whenever, therefore, they find these points to be in their favour, they make a monopoly of their own articles, and will only give a lower price for those of which they know there is a glut in the Russian market, and not having the same necessity of selling as their competitors, they

can always stand out longest, and ultimately carry their point. They have also another great advantage over the Russians in their perfect agreement among themselves on all subjects. They act as one man, not so much from being aware, perhaps, of its advantages, but from being more strictly tied down by the Board of Trade on their side, who are ready enough to relax when the advantage is to be gained, but will never allow any abatement against their own interests. The Russians, having no such impediment, and every man being obliged to be guided by his own circumstances at the moment, make individual bargains at a lower rate than the one taxed by the two Boards; and as soon as *one* has done this, every one else must do the same, or the Chinese will not trade at all. The extreme dexterity of the Celestials in every sort of chicanery is stated by all writers on China, and they put this into practice most advantageously at Kiakhta, by filching a certain quantity out of the chests of tea, and giving short measure in their silk and cotton goods. They have so completely the upper hand of the Russians in their transactions, that this is said to be done in the most bare-faced way, without any fear of a protest on the part of the purchaser.

As the distance from Kiakhta to Nijni is about five thousand versts, the time occupied in conveying the goods thither is naturally very great, and as it is a great object to be among the earliest arrivals there, the Russians are anxious to conclude their bargains and set out. The loss probably falls heavier, however, on the consumer than the merchant. Independent of the duty on all imports, the trader is obliged to deposit

with the Director of the Russian Custom-house a stamped security for his solvency from the district to which he belongs, and he gives bills, payable the following year, for the duties on the goods he imports, before they are allowed to pass the frontier bar. In like manner, before he can obtain his security from his *commune*, he is obliged to produce the receipt for the payment in full of the duties of the preceding year from the Custom-house. Two transactions, which in Russia are not got over without a considerable gratuity being given to all parties concerned.

The thing which it would be most profitable to import for manufacture in the eastern and northern parts of Siberia, would be the raw cottons and materials of which the nankeens are made. The establishment of manufactories for these articles, as an employment to those sentenced to hard labour, would well repay the government, and be of essential service to the whole country. The principal articles of exchange are tea, the brick tea, tobacco, coarse cottons, silks, rhubarb, and a variety of trifling articles executed with great skill in China, such as fans, purses, toys, and ivory-work. On the other side cattle, furs, leather, glass, cloth, and common crockery, of which a vast quantity is exported, strange to say, to the country which has given its name with us to this material.

Four versts beyond the fortress of Troitsko Sauski, is the real hamlet of Kiakhta, consisting of a few houses where only the merchants are allowed to live; and three hundred yards beyond it, over the river, is the Chinese town of Mai-ma-tchin, or, more properly, *the* Mai-ma-tchin, for it signifies in Mongolese the

depôt for commerce. Between these two places, are erected the columns, on the different sides of which are inscribed, in Russian and Chinese characters, the circumstances they commemorate, namely, the fixing the limits of the two empires, of which the ignoble Kiakhta is the Rubicon.

The Mai-ma-tchin is a small rectangularly-built hamlet, having two principal streets, which cross each other at right angles, at the end of each of which is a gate, looking towards the four points of the compass. It is surrounded with a wooden wall, which is its only fortification. The streets are exceedingly narrow, and ill paved, so that two camels can barely pass each other, as at Cairo; but there is a great difference in the height of the houses of the two places. Here they are very small, all of one story, and of wood; the roofs mostly of the same material, though the more inferior sort are covered with turf: they have no windows towards the street, and consist of two small rooms, one of which serves for a warehouse and shop, the other for the occupant to live in. On the other side, the windows are composed of oiled paper, painted with different devices, and sometimes of Russian talc. There is in general a great air of cleanliness, and the furniture of the houses is often of a superior description. They are heated with stoves, like the Russian houses, which are needful, small as the apartments are, for the cold is very great, and, in spite of all, they are not well warmed. A great display is made of all the nondescript articles they have for sale in the shop, and in those of the higher class of merchants, there is great order in stowing away their bedding and house-

hold furniture, all of which are in one common, sitting, eating, and sleeping room.

The number of the inhabitants is about fifteen hundred, all males, no Chinese women being allowed to go there; a few common Mongolese women are seen about, but not many. The *Quarterly Review* doubted this fact in noticing Captain Cochrane's book; but we can assure our readers it is strictly true. A story is told, as having occurred a few years ago to a civil governor of Irkutsk, who took his wife and daughter, disguised in man's attire, to see this place, which all are curious to get a peep of, especially those to whom it is prohibited. The Chinese got wind of it, and as they are notoriously the most fertile in inventing and executing drawings, and other objects of the most indecent nature, they provided a number of these articles in one of the houses where the ladies were introduced, and displayed them on a sudden in such a manner to their notice, that they were placed in the awkwardest predicament, and too happy to make their escape without discovering their sex.

These celestial merchants are a luxurious set of reprobates, who live remarkably well. When they give a grand entertainment, it commences with a *dejeuner*, composed of sixty small dishes, and is followed by a dinner of the same number. Each guest is served with a distinct *plat*, presented to him in small tea-cups, which are composed in a great measure of vegetables, and ragouts of every imaginable description, the ingredients of which it is more prudent not to inquire, if one intends to partake of them. One very favourite dish is a soup made of the sea-worm, several of which

we possess, about two inches long, and an inch broad, perfectly dry and black, in appearance what one might imagine a salted slug to be. These are diluted in hot water, and, being of an elastic nature, they melt into a sort of jelly, or glutinous substance, which, if one could divest oneself of the recollection of its natural form, would not be at all unpalateable. They do not give professedly any wines, but a variety of drinks peculiar to themselves: they have, however, learned, from their intercourse with their Russian neighbours, to appreciate the merits of champagne, which is drunk in torrents during the white month. This white month is the beginning of the Chinese year, our month of February, and we should have gladly been able to be there at that time, and extend our tour to Nertchynsk, the *Ultima Thule* of Russia in this direction, to see the mines there, and enjoy the amusements going on at Kiakhta at that season, when the great exchange of merchandise takes place. But this would have delayed our return to Petersburg till too late for the Grand Duke's marriage, which we were anxious to witness, and the favourable opportunity of returning with the Governor-general was a piece of good fortune not to be thrown away. The scene of carousing and gaiety during this month is described as most amusing, and would be doubtless the best opportunity of seeing the Chinese under the most favourable colours.

During this season, they have a theatre open, where of course, as everywhere else in China, only male actors are allowed to appear on the stage. Previous to the commencement of the fair, a religious ceremony takes place, which lasts three days; the one before,

and the one after the full moon. The streets are lighted with a number of lanterns of coloured and painted silk, which are suspended at regular intervals; and these, during the fête, are kept alight night and day. The merchants retire into the interior, after the fair is over, and are relieved by others every six months. The *chef* of this mercantile settlement is the Dzar-gou-tchai, who is omnipotent in all matters which concern the police arrangements and commercial business. He is always a Mandtchu, not a native Chinese, and belonging to the royal race, the conquerors of the country, receives the most unbounded honours, and has all applications presented to him by the petitioner on his knees. His term of authority extends to three years, at the end of which time he returns to Peking. If the people are satisfied with him, they accompany him on his departure to the gate, and when he goes out, take off a boot, which is then placed over it in token of their approbation of his conduct. This is the greatest honour that can be done to such a functionary, and appears to be the more valued from its being so rarely conferred. There are only two boots over the gate. This functionary is a despot in the attention he exacts from his subordinates, and the strictest etiquette is observed in begging his permission to perform any the most trifling act. It happened that in 1814, the Emperor of Russia desired a fête to be given by the directors of the *douane* at Troitska Sauski, to commemorate the taking of Paris. The Dzar-gou-tchai and other Chinese were invited, and the latter neglected to ask his leave to accept the invitation. When they were going to dinner, he accordingly

forbade them to sit down, and they were constrained to throw themselves on their knees, and intreat pardon and permission, which were graciously accorded to them.

There are few buildings worthy of remark in this little settlement; the residence of the Dzar-gou-tchai is little superior to that of his dependants, and distinguished from them principally by two flag-staffs placed opposite the entrance. There are two pagodas, which, as Mai-ma-tchin is not the earthly abode of the Koutouktou in these parts, but Ourga, are not remarkable for their magnificence. The larger one has a great deal of gaudy carving and gilding in extreme bad taste, and contains five colossal images in a cross-legged sitting position, made of clay and gilt over, dressed in silken robes, with a crown on their heads, and long black beards. Before the principal altar stand four other monsters holding a scroll in their hands, which contains the doctrines of Budha, few of which are understood by the Lamas, but every word scrupulously committed to memory, the loss of one iota being fatal, as each word contains a mystical meaning, and is symbolical of some attribute or emanation of the Divinity. The usual prayer at every moment in the month of a pious believer consists of four Indian words, which Klaproth says, if they have any meaning, it is "Oh! precious Lotus." The rest of the pagoda, which is extensive, is filled with a variety of monsters of the same description, a quantity of arms of all sorts, and two horses of clay, with a banner and attendant to each, saddled and bridled. In the small pagoda is an image representing the Supreme Being with an aureole

and a sword in his hand. There are many remains of ancient pagodas in the Steppes on the Russian side, which have fallen into decay since the Russian occupation.

One of our companions on the return to Petersburg, a German *attaché* to the Governor-general, who had been sent to Ourga, two hundred and sixty versts in the Steppes of Gobi on the road to Peking, in the summer before, on business connected with the mission going there, was present at the great festival in the holy month He described the procession of five hundred Lamas, in their yellow and scarlet robes, as a very imposing one.

The priests of Budha have effected at least one good, in this part of the wide district under their superintendence, in that they have eradicated Shammanism in a great measure. This, the most rascally system of knavery which ever imposed upon mankind to place faith in it, is founded on the agency of evil spirits, who terrify their followers into everything they desire from a threat of haunting them in this world and in the next. The only boast of the Shamans is their power of doing mischief, and by this they extort from the credulous Mongols everything that a person under the influence of ghostly fear can perform. They are by their own desire buried in cross roads, or some conspicuous spot, to have the greater means after death of injuring the ill-fated wretches who frequent the abode of their wizard spirits. They act as physicians, exorcists, and judges in cases of crime, among the northern tribes who put faith in them. Dobell gives a picture of them in the frontispiece of one of his

volumes, but does not give any account of them that we remember. Both men and women are initiated into what may be called a mixture of sorcery and conjuring rather than religion. In cases of illness they make use of incantations and sacrifices to drive out the evil spirits, as everything is attributable to their agency. They are supposed to be driven from the person of the diseased into that of some animal whom the Shaman designates. The most absurd ceremonies, with frequent and deep potations of the intoxicating *kumiss*, are gone through to effect this. Spells, prayers, and the most unintelligible jargon are employed by them to divine the fate of the person labouring under any illness for which they are called in; if they recover, the credit is theirs, if not, it is laid to the account of the sacrifice not being acceptable to the evil spirit. Their dress is a leathern jacket with sleeves from the shoulder to the elbow, and along the outer seam strips of leather are sewed, as well as round the bottoms hanging down to the ground. The jacket is covered with iron plates, and pieces of brass and iron hang from it, which jingle as he jumps about beating his *tambour*. He has a sort of leathern apron from the chin to the knees, his tambour is also furnished with bars of iron and brass, and the drum stick is covered with the skin of some animal; he has also a fur cap which he throws off when the magic spells begin.

When the trial of any one accused of stealing, or some crime of that description, takes place, the Shaman places his tambour and dress before a fire, of which only the embers are burning, and the party accused is placed near it opposite to the sun, and invokes the

most dreadful curses on himself if he is guilty. The Shaman then throws butter upon the embers, and the accused steps over the tambour and dress, and swallows some of the smoke from the butter, and looking up at the sun, says, "If I have sworn falsely, deprive me of thy light and heat." Some time after this he must bite the head of a bear, and as this animal is reckoned extremely sagacious, and even superhumanly wise, they fancy he will turn round and kill the person if he is guilty. There is, however, great unwillingness to go through this ordeal if even they feel their innocence, and not unnaturally, as they are more concerned than the Shaman in the bear's faculty of distinguishing between guilt and innocence. These fellows act the part of conjurors also, in which capacity Dobell speaks of them only, and says they do not display any particular skill in this art.

There was an idea in the heads of some of the Russians formerly, who could not understand the object of our missionaries in settling at Selenginsk, that the British government had designs on Thibet, and that these worthy people were sent there to learn the language and become agents in the scheme. By means of it they said we were to get the Dalai Lama in our power, and then that all the Kalmucks, Mongols, and other worshippers of him would become our zealous allies, and further our conquests in Central Asia. The idea was truly Russian, we do not mean that of the government, but of their subordinate agents, who are apt to judge a little of others by themselves. They even pretended that on the occasion of an interregnum of five years after the spirit of the last Dalai

Lama had quitted his earthly form, and before another was installed in his stead, that the Celestial Emperor would not allow him to be chosen from among the Thibetans, but from among his subjects nearer home, for fear perhaps of an English influence. We certainly get the credit of having a long sight with some people, but it is probably, because they imagine we see through their medium.

On the Yénisséi river, in a pass of the mountains on a high rock, there is a very remarkable natural curiosity, such, at least, we conceive it to be, although the superstitions of the native Tatars have, of course, given it a præternatural origin. It has the appearance of the figure of a man petrified, and so complete is the delusion at the height at which it stands, that it is difficult to say what it really is. The Tatar account of it is, that a certain Khan of theirs in the early ages embraced Christianity, long before the time of the Russian occupation, and that the devil, in revenge for his conversion, fastened him naked to this spot, where he became stone. In the Mynasinski Steppes there is, we were assured by a person who professed to have seen it, a labyrinth, consisting of eighteen chambers, vaulted in the living rock, which was made at a very remote period. It is sculptured in all parts, the vaults as well as the walls, and represents a variety of idolatrous subjects and sacrifices, many of which are painted in *fresco*, and are as fresh now, as if they had been lately under the painter's brush, a thing not very credible, from their exposure to the outward air. Our informant assured us that a stranger, who got into this labyrinth without a guide or the thread of Ariadne

would inevitably be lost, and never find his way out. We relate these stories, less to record them as facts, than to show, that in the nineteenth century these fabulous and superstitious ideas prevail in these parts, as much as they ever did in the dark ages.

The mines of Nertchynsk are seven hundred versts to the north-east of Kiakhta, over an abominable road, and in going direct from Verkhne-Udinsk, the chain of the great Yablonnoi mountains is passed. This vast range divides the streams which fall into the Icy Sea from those whose course lies eastward to the Pacific Ocean. It enters Siberia from Mongolia, whence it crosses the whole country, till it terminates at Cape Tchukotski, in Behring's Straits. Towards the north it has the name of Stanovoi. At its nearest point to Verkhne-Udinsk, though it is not apparently of great height, its elevation above the level of the sea must be considerable. Here the river Vityme has its source which falls into the Léna, and that into the Icy Sea, the whole course being five thousand versts, though the direct distance from the commencement of the chain in Siberia to the sea is not more than twenty degrees of latitude. Giving the average fall of the river at a foot per verst, the Yablonnoi would be five thousand feet above the level of the sea.

Nertchynsk is a wretched village, situated on the confluence of the Nertcha and Chilka, which latter is formed at a distance of sixty versts, by the junction of the Ynegoda and Onon, and in the opposite direction, at its own junction with the Argun, as we have before stated, takes the name of the Amur. The district of Nertchynsk is inhabited by the old free crown peasants,

and the more recent ones, who, when their term of hard labour expired, from being exiles, become colonized peasants. A few other crown peasants, especially belonging to the mines, and the Burates of Khorynsk, and the Tonguses *à cheval*, as they are called, to distinguish them from the Nomades, whose sole property consists and existence depends on their reindeer, while these keep a number of horses, sheep, and cattle, make up the number of the inhabitants. These Tonguses are reckoned at five thousand. The head of this tribe was originally, in the time of Peter the Great, honoured with the rank of *gentilhomme* of Moscow, a higher rank than that of the other provinces, in remuneration of the services he conferred by quitting his Mandtchu sovereign, and throwing himself into the arms of Russia. The ancient of the tribe is still chosen from among this man's descendants by the people, and his office is for life.

The soil here is black, and highly productive; but the inclemencies of the climate make agriculture a precarious subsistence, although the yield is often forty for one of the seed sown. There are, or were, eighteen thousand peasants belonging to the mines, whose services are so laborious, and their time so much taken up in working for the government, that they have little surplus to dedicate to their own advantage. Ten thousand peasants were sent here by the Emperor Alexander with the best intentions; but, from a variety of circumstances, these have dwindled down, instead of increasing as they should have done, their wives and families being brought with them, to a very small number. The government establishment is a long way

from the village of Nertchynsk, and here the worst class of felons only are sent, and are in chains, together with others of a less abandoned description, but who have deserted several times. Twelve hours a day in summer, and six in winter, are their hours of labour; but *no* political exile is found among them. The labour in the foundries is, however, considered harder and more detrimental to health than in the mines, from the evaporations. Formerly a quicksilver mine was worked; but it was found so injurious to those employed in it, the overseers as well as labourers, that it has been abandoned. All the Siberian mines are warm, except these, which are very cold. They are worked on the old foundation of some which have been opened here by an ancient and unknown race of inhabitants. The greater part of them are lead mines, among which the silver is found; but the expense of extracting the silver alone, as we have said before, is so great, that it would not be worth while to continue it; the lead, however, is so necessary an article for the foundries of Barnaoul, that, independent of employing the convicts, the want of it could not well be supplied from any other source.

Captain Cochrane was strongly misinformed in the account he gives of these mines; in more than one respect he has exaggerated the produce of silver, which, he says, vaguely however, was *formerly, i. e.*, formerly twenty years ago, three hundred puds annually, and *only* twenty-five thousand puds of lead, which, he says, is nothing at all, and he consequently called it a ruinous concern. He would have been right enough if the lead were really worth nothing, for

half a million of roubles would hardly pay the expenses, but the fact is, that the lead is the more valuable ore of the two in that particular country, and the silver would have been worth a little more than half a million of roubles, if it was what he stated it at. There is also an iron foundry which is productive. Magnet, arsenic, and antimony, are likewise found. In 1812 the Burates discovered a tin mine on their own property, which the *Taysha* ceded to the government; but although the ore was remarkably rich, producing sixty per cent. of metal, it was not found in a regular vein, but only in detached lumps, so that the amount extracted was small, and not worth the expense. Added to this, they found that the cost of transport to Russia was so great, that it was cheaper to buy it in England.

On the mountain of Odontchélone, in this neighbourhood, are found the finest acquamarines of all colours: green, blue, and orange-coloured, of which the latter are very rare. Topazes also are often found. We obtained some good specimens of acquamarines; but a large morsel, perfectly clear, without any flaw, with the pyramidal head perfect, is one of the most valuable articles in a collection of this sort. This neighbourhood abounds, also, in mineral springs, which have never been analyzed or frequented, excepting one of them, which Pallas describes, and which he himself submitted to a chemical investigation. As the directors of the mines have their own lands which produce corn for the consumption of those employed in them, the peasants have no market, and consequently their labour is limited to what is strictly necessary for

themselves and their families only. They have good pasturage for sheep and cattle, and the *chasse* is a main source of subsistence for them. The lynxes here are of a superior quality; the fur from the stomach being particularly soft, having black spots on a perfectly white ground; in Russia these black spots are given them artificially.

All the inhabitants of this district are passionately fond of racing; and betting, which one supposed an excitement of civilized people, is carried to as ruinous an extent among these Nomade tribes. It often happens that the losers go home with nothing left but their whip. The horses are of a good lasting sort, of a Mongolese breed, and the distances they run generally from twenty to thirty vests. They have also a sort of tournament on horseback, which consists in shooting with the bow and arrow, at which they are remarkably dexterous; this amusement is called *Oblava*. They are so skilful as to be able to fire one arrow into the air, and then split it with another. The Ostiaks of Berézof shoot also, flying, the birds of passage. The tournament among the Tonguses and Burates of Nertchynsk is thus arranged: some hundreds of them on horseback surround a large extent of forest, which, on a signal being given, they beat *en masse*, and drive out the game in the direction where their comrades are placed. The *chevreuils* are the principal source of sport; as soon as one breaks covert, the horseman nearest, or his horse who is broke to the business, follows it. The rider drops the bridle, and gives him his head, and he follows the animal in all his turns, while the sportsman shoots at him, and rarely misses,

difficult as it must be. The arrows are long, and have a heavy iron head, which is fixed in a ball of horn pierced through with holes, that makes a whizzing about the ears of the *chevreuil* if it misses him, which frightens and makes him stop, so that he becomes an easy shot for some one else. The Taysha gives these parties frequently in winter, and whenever a Russian officer happens to pass, in compliment to him.

The Yakut horses are considered the best in Siberia; they are large and bony, strong, and capable of going through a vast deal of work, and in winter, when they are employed, they find their own provender by scraping away the snow with their feet to get to the grass. As autumn sets in, their coats get longer, and in winter they are almost as long and thick as a bear's. They have a coarse head, but show blood in other points, so much so, that many of them were sent to the famous stud of the late Count Orlof, in Russia. Ten thousand of them are employed every year in conveying the provisions of corn, brandy, and marine stores to Okhotsk, which is a great source of subsistence for the people. The manner in which this is managed is primitive enough. Each Yakut has the charge of eleven horses, who march in line, fastened to to each other by a rope of horsehair round the neck of the first, on which the conductor sits, and which is then passed under the belly of the rest, and fixed to each of their tails. This answers very well as long as the road is good, but if one horse of the string gets bogged, the rest must necessarily stop, and get bogged too. On each of the ten, two leathern sacks of goods are placed, weighing conjointly six puds, which are

fixed on a sort of saddle without stuffing, which rests on two sticks placed crossways, and fastened by a running knot, so that they keep each other *in equilibrio.* When they come to a stop in a quagmire, the unfortunate conductor has first to unload all the horses, and place the baggage on solid ground; then he has to get the horses out of the bog, and put *them* on solid ground, and reload them. So that, without any assistance, he has to carry about five and twenty cwt. of baggage twice every time this accident occurs, which is very frequently. During the operation he swears frightfully, but as soon as he is all right, he lights his pipe and jumps on his horse as happy as a prince, although the same operation will probably have to be performed again after a few hundred yards. This has to be done from morning till night, and perhaps from night till morning, for a month, the time it takes to go in this way from Yakutsk to Okhotsk.

As the season was not yet arrived for crossing the Baikal on the ice, there was nothing for it but returning by the same disagreeable road, making a circuit not only irksome, but much longer in point of time than the direct one across it. The passage in sledges on the ice is agreeable and rapid; the point where it is crossed is not quite sixty versts, which is sometimes performed in two hours and a half, and the view of the surrounding mountains is imposing and majestic. There are, occasionally, small fissures in the ice, and particularly in the spring, when the season approaches for its dissolution, which must be formidable to an unhabituated traveller, but as the horses and their drivers are thoroughly practised in getting over them, there is no real danger. When the crack is small, the

horses jump over them without stopping; when they are large, planks are laid across so as to form a bridge, which is made and unmade in an instant, the planks being carried for the purpose, and dragged behind the sledge. If the fissures are too large even for this, a bridge is made of large blocks of ice, which they cut off on the side of the opening, and the driver, with a sort of leaping-pole, jumps over the chasm. He then fastens on other similar blocks from the opposite side. The bridge is clearly none of the most secure, but the horses are unharnessed, and passed over first, and then the carriage is pulled over as rapidly as possible by ropes. Sometimes it occurs that a horse, going at full speed, is all of a sudden *enfoncé* in the ice, which, instead of cracking, has become soft and porous; the driver, in that case, jumps on his back with great quickness, crawls over him, disengages him in an instant from the sledge, and, as he is blown, pulls him out by main force before he has time to struggle and sink deeper in the icy bog. In order to blow him more effectually, he throws a slip knot round his neck, and draws it as tight as possible, so as to deprive him of the little breath he had remaining. Having lugged him out, he harnesses again as quick as lightning; and the whole operation does not take more time than it does to relate the manner of extricating him.

The caravans with goods from Irkutsk to Kiakhta have a far more tedious route round the lake, than any of the other travellers, and this, indeed, for a long period before the ice is passable. From the beginning of November, that is, for two months, they are obliged to make this *détour*, and the expense is much more

considerable, although by no means proportionate to the labour of the conductors. The snow in the mountains begins to fall in August, and by November it is generally six feet deep. The mode of clearing it away, it not being yet frozen sufficiently to make a solid surface to pass over, is troublesome enough. They first dig out a passage of a certain number of versts, and turn their horses into it, and then make them gallop up and down, backwards and forwards, to consolidate and harden the snow, and then fasten large branches of fir to an empty sledge, of which they make a sort of harrow, and with this they clear away the snow from the sides. Having performed this preliminary operation, they harness a long string of horses to the machine, who, from constantly passing and re-passing, by degrees make a good road, wide enough for their sledges to go easily through. These, loaded with merchandise, follow in a line, one after the other, to the end of the road, which has thus been rendered passable. They then begin afresh with another such passage, and so on till the whole is got over.

Each *traineau* at this season carries at most fifteen puds. The first of them does not accomplish more than ten versts a-day; those who follow, when the road is consolidated, as much as in ordinary travelling, about forty versts. It is strange that these sledge-drivers should not agree to club together to pay labourers to do this needful work for them, while, under the present system, all the *onus* lies on the first, and all the others profit by their exertions. Such are the different modes of transit for merchandise and passengers, the post, the produce of the mines, the criminals to work them, and all the articles of import and export trade between

Russia and China, valuable and bulky as they are. Added to this, a great deal of the corn for the support of the distant provinces, and the furs for the Russian and Chinese markets, must pass this way; so that it may be said almost that the principal riches of this vast empire either cross, or make a circuit round, this inland sea; and yet nothing is done by government to facilitate the conveyance, and consequently increase the trade. It is impossible to say to what an extent it might be augmented by better arrangements being entered into in the mode of trading with the Celestials, and by making a really good road round the Baikal, and one kept in order by the government during the snowy season, before the lake is frozen over, together with the establishment of steamers, at least to tow over vessels, and thereby shorten the time lost in the transit considerably—if a more convenient spot for the Russians than Kiakhta, and one equally so to the Chinese, such as Semipolatinsk or Buchtarminsk, could not be fixed on. In the present state of the Chinese empire, even this is not so difficult to accomplish; for we do not imagine that the reported defeats of Russian armies in the Caucasus would arrive in the same form of exaggeration to the ears of the Chinese monarch, or that they would have the same effect as our imbecile mode of treating him, under the auspices of Elliot and Co., are said to have had on the Burmese ruler. The elements of commerce on a large scale are not wanting, although there is a limit to it, especially as we can send goods to Canton by sea at a cheaper rate of carriage than the Russians can by land to Peking. When this is the case, time will bring about the opportunity of taking advantage of it.

CHAPTER X.

Start from Irkutsk for Petersburg.—Tomsk.—Barabinski Steppes.—Caravans with gold going to Petersburg.—Kainsk.—Omsk.—Road to Ekaterinburg.—Fair of Irbit.—Tobolsk Government.—Town.—Re-enter Russia before reaching Ekaterinburg.—Description of the Town.—Merchant Riazánof.—Mines.—Copper.—Malachite.—Gold.—Platinum.—Schools and Establishments.—Demìdof.—Jacoblef.—Stone-cutting.—Town of Perm.—Mesmerism.—Village of Sabakina.—Burán.—Town of Casan.—Description of it.—Journey to Nijnij Novgorod.—Description of it.—The Fair.—Last Journey to Moscow.—Bad Roads.—Arrive there.—Retrospect of Siberia.—Moscow.—Passion for Music.—Bohémiennes.—Ceremonies of Easter.—Petersburg.—Marriage of the Grand Duke Césarévich.—Fêtes at Court.—General View of Russia and her *avenir*.

FIVE *tarantasses* were packed, and ready for an expedition of five thousand versts to Petersburg, in General Rupert's court-yard, in one of which we were to make the homeward journey, on our arrival at Irkutsk. And now we began to experience the pleasure of travelling with a great man: no delays for horses; our own cook going before with the *batterie de cuisine*, in order to have everything in readiness on our arrival at the village where we were to stop to eat, and generally a sumptuous entertainment provided in the principal house in every town through which we passed. Good as the mode of travelling in a *tarantass* is in winter, from the traveller being always in a horizontal position, and having as much artificial warmth as possible, and the blood being always in free circulation from the posture in which he is placed, it is no trifle to travel day and night almost without intermission for five

weeks, at a great rate, often over roads which remind you more of going down into the trough of a sea in an open boat in a storm, than of being in a carriage on *terra firma*, and that *terra firma* being as hard as 30° of cold and a great deal of traffic on the snow can make them.

Being some twenty years younger than the Governor-general, we felt much less inconvenience from it than he did: he fairly confessed, on arriving at Moscow, that nothing should tempt him to make a similar journey again. The road was the same as far as Tomsk, where a short halt took place, and the General received the homage of all persons having any interest in gold-washing speculations in his government. After leaving Tomsk, our road was different to that by which we had come there from Barnaoul, as we went the direct route by Kainsk to Omsk. Shortly after leaving the town, you enter the so-called Barabinski Steppes, though, from the cultivated and inhabited appearance of it, it does not deserve that name. It was so sixty years ago, and a more bleak, inhospitable spot was hardly to be found in West Siberia; but the then Governor-general persuaded the Empress Catherine to allow him all the recruits of one conscription (not so numerous a body as in the present day) to colonize this waste. The result has been eminently successful; it is now a cultivated, productive district, with such a distribution of rivers and forests as to make it picturesque. There are still remaining many of the *Autochthon* Tatars, called *Sugays*, who breed a most useful race of horses, like those of the Yakuts, and the travelling is very expeditious.

On arriving at Kainsk, a considerable town five hundred versts from Tomsk, we found the only impediment that can interfere with a Governor-general, except royalty, which obliged us to pass the night there. This was the caravan conveying the gold from Barnaoul to Petersburg, which employed sixty horses, and it was deemed expedient to give them twelve hours' start of us, that we might not fall in their way again before reaching Omsk, where we were to stay a day or two. Kainsk seems a flourishing town with several good buildings, and a considerable trade going on. Great quantities of swans'-down are sold here and very cheap, as swans abound in the lakes in the vicinity. We were well lodged, and started next morning for Omsk, passing through a country, which in summer must be exceedingly pretty and even picturesque.

We reached Omsk, on the morning of the $\frac{24 \text{ December,}}{5 \text{ January,}}$ and we were hospitably lodged by our friend Baron Howen, the *chef* of the *Etat Major;* the General took up his quarters at Prince Gortschakof's, the rest of the party in the different quarters assigned for them. We remained here till the morning of the 28th of December, old style, Christmas being commemorated in the usual mode of all countries with dinners and balls, and here with the addition of a parade. We went to church with the numerous protestant congregation, who have, however, as yet no resident clergyman, the German who officiated belonging to the neighbourhood of Barnaoul. We dined every day with the Prince, who exceeded, if possible, his former kindness and hospitality to us, and expressed his regret only that he feared our next meeting would, probably, be in the

" valley of Jehoshaphat." And this consideration is the only drawback to the pleasure one receives in making agreeable acquaintances in foreign countries, that it can but rarely happen that one ever meets with them again, especially those who live in so distant a part of the world, although the facilities of communication and increased intercourse with the most remote regions are fast annihilating space, and reducing travelling to a question of time. It is, however, always pleasant to think that some accident may throw one in the way of those we should like to see again, and the most singular combinations often bring it about when we least expect it. We hope it may do so, especially, in the case of Baron Howen, an excellent and honest Courlander, a nation always celebrated for possessing those qualities.

About a hundred versts before reaching Omsk, we passed through the town of Tumèn, a flourishing place with a large carpet and paper manufactory, and a considerable trade in tallow and timber; it has, also, some large tanneries, and being in the direct road to Irbit from the east, the transit of goods gives plenty of employment to the carriers. At this place the road branches off to Tobolsk, the former seat of government, a town now about the size of Irkutsk, but not likely to rise as that is rapidly doing. It is no longer a place of passage between Russia and East Siberia, and has nothing to support it, but the fair of Irbit which takes place in February and March, and which is almost as frequented as that of Nijni. Tobolsk is situated on the Tobole and Irtysch at the point where they fall into the Yénisséi or Ob', and is the residence of the

Archbishop of all Siberia. Numbers of the political exiles live here and in the neighbourhood. The first schools in Siberia were established here in Peter the Great's time by the Swedish prisoners who were liberated at the peace of Nystadt. In point of society it is quite on a par with any town in Siberia, and from having been so long the capital has more artisans and tradespeople established in it, than either Omsk or Tomsk. It had a very large caravanserai which was burned down a few years ago, with a great many of the best shops. Many Tatars are settled there who convey goods to and from Bokhara.

The town is situated, like Nijni Novogorod, on an eminence, from which the view is very fine, but the cold is excessive, more so than in any civilized town, perhaps, in the world. The thermometer falls sometimes to 40°. Notwithstanding this the district about it is, perhaps, the most cultivated and productive in Siberia. Fish is a great article of subsistence to the inhabitants, and the conveyance of salt from the great magazines, of which we have already taken notice, is a great source of profit to them. There is a paper manufactory here also; and the best leather, that which we know by the name of Russian leather, is tanned at Tobolsk. The heat in summer is as excessive, as the cold in winter, or vegetation could not, of course, be so rapid as it is, cucumbers and melons growing in the open air. The Ob' is not frozen till November, and the ground thaws completely in summer. Berézof is the most south-westerly point, where it never thaws, but more eastward the limit of perpetual ground ice is more to the southward. It is, how-

ever, clear that the fact of the under stratum being always frozen does not interfere with the growth of trees, as the largest forests are found on ground that never thaws above a foot deep. At Nertchynsk the frozen stratum is not more than six feet thick, and is becoming every year less. In 1821, a dead body was found at Berézof, accidentally disinterred, which had been buried ninety-two years, and showed no signs of decomposition, or of having undergone any change since it was put into the ground.

We got into the government of Tobolsk the second day after leaving Omsk, from whence we had begun at once to turn our backs upon the Steppes. The weather was clear, and the sun shone brightly, and the difference in the appearance of the country and scenery was surprising. Undulating valleys and mountains, winding rivers and fine forests, were everywhere visible, all the way to Ekaterinburg. As might be expected, Tobolsk is, in consequence, the most populous government in Siberia, containing about one-half of the whole number of the inhabitants in the western division. We were now approaching the confines of Russia proper, and were struck with the idea of never having seen a beggar in Siberia, or an Aurora Borealis. The latter are more general in summer than in winter, but we never saw one in Russia, though so common in Sweden and other northern countries. Siberia we believe to be the only country where the former are not numerous enough both in winter and summer.

Before reaching Ekaterinburg the nominal frontier of Siberia is passed, although the Ural Mountains are clearly the natural boundary. After three and a-half

days' travelling we reached this handsome town, about one o'clock in the morning of the Russian new-year, and were superbly lodged, at the house of a rich merchant, one Riazánof. His house is a palace, and furnished with all the luxury and good taste which Moscow artificers could devise; he told us the furniture cost him sixty thousand roubles. Like all of his class he did not inhabit it, that is, not the first and second stories; his apartments, which were also very good and comfortable, are on the ground floor, where there was a billiard table and many luxuries. We began the acquaintance, even at that late hour, with copious libations of excellent champagne, in honour of the new-year, which lasted till very near sunrise, and we were glad enough to have the prospect of a good bed for once; but, alas! it was a delusion, for though there was a superb new green leather mattress, before we put our candle out, we saw symptoms of living creatures, who "murder sleep," making their escape from the wooden bedstead, who had not for years, probably, felt the genial warmth of a human body, to tempt them from their lurking places. We were too sleepy, however, to regard this disgusting addition to our society as an impediment to a night's repose, but in the morning the sight which presented itself was indescribable. The sheets were literally alive with thousands of the nasty vermin, of whom many had fallen victims to our involuntary rebuffs during the night, and we had an indistinct recollection of feeling them in our sleep crawl over our face, traces of which were very clearly observable by their blood which stained the linen in every direction. This was purely

owing to the carelessness of the servants, whose business it was to put the bedstead out in the open air for a few days, during the severe frost, which would have eradicated the whole family, and none of our fellow-travellers suffered by the same annoyance. Next night we laid our mattress, as usual, on the floor, and we were quite free from them. This was the only time we ever saw these disgusting animals in our whole journey. Here, also, we were robbed of the gold head off our walking stick, which might be worth five pounds; it was, of course, massive and solidly fixed, and must have required some trouble to get off; the "inutile lignum" was replaced in the carriage, and we did not immediately discover the loss. Singularly enough, the General had said to us the day before, "Now we have entered Russia, we must place a sentinel to guard the baggage," and it was the only theft committed upon us during a year's residence in the country, so we had not much to complain of, and after all it was the servant's fault. Our host is one of the richest merchants in Russia, and we recognised him as a *Roskolnik* by his beard. Next morning we had a visit from the Governor, General Glinka, a very gentlemanly man, whom we often met at Petersburg afterwards; strange to say, he does not speak French, but a little German. The palace he occupies is very handsome.

Ekaterinburg is situated on the river Iset, and would be considered a very handsome city in any part of the world. It is not nearly so large as Casan, nor has it any remains of antiquity like that city; but the number of handsome new public edifices, the width of the streets, and movement in the place, which contains

a great number of manufactories, in addition to the foundries and mining establishments in the neighbourhood, give it an air of comfort and well-being seldom seen in Russian towns. The rapid increase in its population, and handsome new buildings springing up every day, give promise of its becoming, in a few years, one of the most important cities in the empire. The demand for labour has produced its effects, both in and out of Ekaterinburg, the country about it being highly cultivated, and abounding in all the necessaries, and many of the luxuries, of life. The number of the inhabitants cannot be less than five and twenty thousand, although it is difficult to distinguish accurately between the permanent and temporary residents, the latter of whom are very numerous, from the constant communication with the different mining establishments and other manufactories in the neighbourhood.

The foundations of Ekaterinburg were laid by Peter the Great in 1723, and the Empress Catherine his wife, from whom it received its name, completed it. It was, therefore, hardly in existence a century ago, and was, at best, composed of a few wooden houses, a station for the caravans between Russia and Siberia, and the residence of the superintendent of the mines of the Ural, as well as a depôt for criminals who were employed on its fortifications and works in the neighbourhood. It rose rapidly into importance, as the crown and private individuals opened new sources of wealth into it. It is built on the slope of the Ural, and is eight hundred and sixty feet above the level of the sea. Almost all the persons formerly employed in the direction of the various *mines* in the vicinity were

Germans and English; the number of these is now much diminished, and the management of a great part of these immense concerns is in the hands of Russians. Ekaterinburg is to Russia, for it is nominally a part of Russia proper, though to the east of the Ural, what Barnaoul is to Siberia, the depôt for all the gold and silver extracted from the bosom of that mountain and the adjacent country. The quantity of the former, which is collected either by washing or from the mines, increases considerably every year, while that of the latter diminishes, from the reason we have given before, that the expense of producing the one and the other is pretty nearly equal, indeed sometimes greater against the silver, and consequently it is neglected in favour of the gold.

The oldest of the gold mines is about fifteen versts from the town, where there is a smelting house like that at Barnaoul; but it is not very productive. The sands, however, which are constantly being discovered, abounding in the precious metal, are far more productive, and the relative proportions, as compared to the sand washed, are often much greater than in the Altai. As much as eight *zolotniks* to the hundred pud are commonly realized. The advantage of improved machinery, and especially the steam-engine, give Ekaterinburg also a wider field for the profitable investment of capital, as well as its proximity to Moscow and Petersburg. The calculation of Baron Humboldt thirteen years ago was, that the environs of the Ural *then* produced annually half the quantity of gold which the Brazils supplied in its best days; whereas the mines of the latter, at one period since, have only

given a tenth part of their former produce, and those of the Ural are now immensely more productive than when he made his calculation. They probably now furnish as much gold as the Brazils ever did, and far more than that country does at the present day. But the platinum, gold, and silver, constitute by no means all the riches of this district; the iron and copper are, perhaps, more lucrative ore for private proprietors, than even the precious metals.

There are two establishments in the neighbourhood belonging to individuals, which are really royal. The one between thirty and forty versts distance, belonging to Mr. Jacoblef, a gentleman of Petersburg, perhaps, in absolute ready money, the wealthiest individual in the world; and the other, three hundred versts off, which we had not time to visit, belonging to Mr. Demìdof, who is known personally to many of our readers, and to many more, by the fame of his colossal fortune, which is, however, far smaller than that of Mr. Jacoblef. The establishment of the latter gentleman is a complete town. He employs several thousand workmen, who are all well lodged and fed. There are for their use a hospital, church, various schools, a public dispensary, clergy, medical men, schoolmasters, and very good shops of every kind, all belonging to the proprietor, and kept up at his expense. The director of the whole has a salary of fifty thousand roubles a year, and the appearance of comfort and good management that pervades it, is the best proof that the establishment is flourishing, not less as regards the employer, than the employed. Mr. Jacoblef has several productive districts for the washing of gold

sands; but his great establishment is an iron foundry, which supplies a great part of the empire. That of Mr. Demidof is for the working of copper and malachite; from his mines comes the major part of that material of which the superb vases are composed, one of the finest of which was sent by the Emperor as a present to the Queen. This beautiful mineral, when polished, is a very expensive article, from its hardness and the difficulty of working it. On the spot the rough blocks are sold for eight hundred roubles the pud, or about a guinea a pound; but there is no proportion between the intrinsic value of the raw material and the manufactured article. Even at Ekaterinburg the cost of the latter is very great.

It is neither a matter of particular interest, nor is it easy to give the individual quantities of iron and copper obtained from individual sources; the whole amount from the Ural district may be called about ten million puds annually, of which a considerable portion comes from the mines of the Princess Butera in this neighbourhood. It is also difficult to give an average price, as it varies materially; we will only mention one fact, which we had from the Princess Butera's agent, a German gentleman, to whom she gave us a letter of introduction, at the fair of Nijni in 1840. When we arrived, we inquired of him how the trade was that year; he replied, that the prices of iron were low, and that there were few buyers, but that he had been so far lucky, that he had disposed of the whole of his cargo, at low prices, it is true, but it produced eight hundred thousand roubles. He added, that the rival seller Mr. Jacoblef, had at least two million of roubles

value of iron at the fair, but that he had sold none of it, because he insisted on having five roubles the pud, and the market price was only four; his colossal wealth, however, gave him a monopoly to a certain extent, and he could afford to wait till the following year for his money. This may give some idea of the wealth of individuals derived from one source only, and that one of the least valuable intrinsically, though, perhaps, in the long run, the most profitable. Great part of the produce of the copper mines of Mr. Demìdof is coined in the mint of Ekaterinburg, which has made a sensible improvement in the last few years, both as to the quality of the metal, and the execution of the money stamped. This gentleman had last year a hundred puds of platinum also to his own share, after deducting the fifteen per cent. which the government receive on this metal as well as the gold and silver.

Besides these establishments, there are several others which employ a number of workmen, such as a manufactory for lackering iron plates for tables, tea-boards, and other purposes. One for polishing malachite, and converting it into ornamental objects, such as vases, *presses-papier*, and the like, and a large establishment for cutting the precious stones, with which the Ural abounds. This is brought to a high state of perfection, and would do honour to artists of any country. Amethysts, topazes, emeralds, and diamonds are occasionally found here; jasper, agate, porphyry, several sorts of marble, though of an inferior quality to the Italian, zircons, various kinds of quartzes, and many other minerals, which, when polished, are exceedingly ornamental, are staple commodities, which pro-

duce considerable profits to those employed in working them. Asbestos gloves are also made here, which are curious, rather than useful; they are cleaned by being again passed through the fire. There is also a large cannon foundry in the neighbourhood, although the Russian iron, in general, is not considered so good for that purpose as the Swedish. The Imperial government have constantly an officer of artillery in Sweden, superintending the boring of cannon, of which they import a great many pieces every year from that country.

But all these establishments furnish employment for many other persons besides those actually at work in them, as the materials must be turned to purposes of utility and taste, after they come from the different laboratories. Artists of all sorts are engaged in painting and carving, and a taste for the fine arts is thus insensibly introduced into the country, and the surplus income is expended in ornamenting the houses with objects of luxury and refinement. We have seen many most costly articles in the private residences of Ekaterinburg, which would have been worthy of any nobleman's palace in the world, all the produce of the city and its inhabitants. However political economists may undervalue the consequences of such tastes becoming general, we are inclined to give them considerable influence in civilising mankind, and elevating the character. By themselves they certainly will not prove a high state of civilization; but are evidence, at least, that an advancement is making where they are generally visible. If confined solely to one class, they may be, doubtless, co-existent with the lowest degree of moral and mental cultivation in the masses;

but in a town like Ekaterinburg, where the grades of society are not so distinctly marked as in the capitals, they appear to us as a good sign. They are a sign of prosperity, and a proof that those who possess them have more than is necessary to supply their physical wants, and that their ideas are sufficiently humanized to prompt them to expend the surplus in something beyond the gratification of the more ignoble appetites.

There is a handsome bridge, of five arches, over the river in the centre of the town, near which the principal buildings are well grouped together, and a spacious and well laid out public garden near it. There are five churches, and a Greek monastery, and a handsome Mineralogical Museum, containing a number of good specimens. In the neighbourhood are some mineral springs, which numbers of persons frequent in the month of May for bathing and drinking the waters. We did not unfortunately stay here long enough to judge of the society generally; but it is said to be very good. We were all anxious to get on to Moscow, or a fortnight might be very agreeably spent in visiting the different works going on in the vicinity, some of them at a distance of three hundred versts.

After two days' repose, we started once more for Casan, and fifty versts from the town began the ascent of the Ural. As this is extended, however, over a space of eighty versts, the height is not so apparent, from the ascent being gradual. The cold was great, and the roads atrocious—indeed, during the first night, we heard we had been more than once in a perilous situation. The scenery is good, the roads are skirted on both sides by large forests which come close up to

the town, and cultivation is general wherever they are cleared away. The traffic was now considerable, from the caravans going to the fair of Irbit, and the roads which, in summer, are excellent, were now in a state, the equal of which is not, we firmly believe, to be found in the universe. From the frequency of the communications before the snow was hardened down, so as to offer resistance to the sledges, the whole road was cut up into deep furrows, the passage over which in a carriage without springs, at the rate of twelve miles an hour, may be more easily imagined than described. When the troughs were sufficiently wide for the *tarantass* to descend to the bottom, and then rise the opposite hill, it was not so bad, but when they were narrow, and the horses jumped over them, it was enough to dislocate every joint in one's body; yet were we never upset, though the underwork received frequent fractures from the hardness of the ground. After the mountains were fairly passed, the road became excellent, but the forests seemed to cover the whole face of the country.

The government of Perm is proverbial for the goodness of its roads, there being a macadamized *chaussée* almost throughout, but against the natural impediments caused by the snow there is no providing. The second night we slept at the town of Kongour in excellent quarters. This is an old Tatar habitation, of which some remains are in existence. The following day we got to the town of Perm, and stopped at the governor's, Mr. Agarrof's, a gentlemanlike and hospitable person, who had formerly been in the same capacity at Archangel. The government of Perm is

one of the most populous, well cultivated, and improving in this part of the empire. Perm itself is situated on the Kama, is well and regularly built, though all the houses are of wood, a very comfortable thing for the inmates in so cold a place. It has a considerable trade of its own, and a great number of mines of iron and copper in the neighbourhood.

Our host, Mr. Agarrof, found the climate, though bad enough, better than that of Archangel. He told us that he had been so completely crippled there by rheumatism, that he had lost the use of his limbs entirely, and that his legs and arms were covered at all the joints with lumps of exfoliating bone, for which the faculty had failed in finding any remedy, and gave him up as incurable. In this situation he put himself into the hands of an old woman, who cured him by mesmerism; she used to visit him every morning for an hour, and gently rub the parts, which in a short time resumed their natural appearance, and he was completely cured, as we saw, and in the enjoyment of a green old age. He told us his own *valet de chambre*, whom he brought from Archangel, possessed the power of mesmerising in a lower degree than the old woman, but that he is of great use to him when he feels any return of his old complaint. We heard this fact from him, in consequence of our attention being drawn to a portrait of an old woman on his table; and upon asking him whom it represented, he said, "That is my saviour," and related the anecdote we have repeated.

We had no sooner turned our backs on this government, than the roads again became execrable; the snow was falling, the cold excessive from a high wind

getting up, and we were overturned four times in twenty-four hours without injury, the roads being so bad, that we could not go fast enough to receive any serious damage from an upset. We ought to have reached Casan on the evening of the 17th, but were obliged to stop twenty-five versts short of it in the little village of Sabakina, owing to there being certain indications of an approaching *burán**. We slept in a peasant's cottage, a numerous *Roskolnik* family, who seemed exceedingly comfortable, and one in which the greatest decency prevailed, compatible with the numbers who slept under the same roof. The principal room was large and divided off in partitions, better, at all events, than the state of an Irish barrack, where men, women, and children are huddled together promiscuously in the same bed. For our own part, we slept very soundly on a table till daylight, when we were eager enough to ascertain the state of the weather, which was far from promising. On going over to the General's quarters, however, we found that the report had been made to him favourable as to our being able to reach Casan, though we hinted the probability of the wind in the village being a *burán* in the plain, and the event justified our suggestion. When we got within seven versts of the city, and could see its towers, the wind, which had been on the increase the whole way, became what we had anticipated—a *burán*, though fortunately the snow had ceased. When

* A burán is, in the language of the country, a whirlwind which mixes the falling snow with that which it raises from the earth, so as to prevent a driver from seeing his road, and is often the cause of fatal accidents, those who are exposed to it being sometimes snowed up, and frozen to death.

it was at the worst, we found ourselves on the edge of a precipice, which, from having been cleared of snow by the wind, was so slippery, that the horses could hardly keep their footing. Two *tarantasses* had passed before us; we were the third; it seems that our *yemtschik* was not very expert, and that one of those who had passed before made signs to him to alter his course, or we should be upset, but he did not, or could not heed them, and over we rolled with an awful smash, fortunately on the side away from the precipice. Our vehicle was considerably damaged, and we crawled out of it, thinking we would walk down the worst part of the mountain, which was now on the descent. We had not gone six paces before we were carried off our legs by the force of the wind, and rolled over and over down the hill, unable to stop ourselves, and having the prospect of a broken neck before us. The cold in the mean time was piercing. By some good fortune we got our heel against a stone, and at last came to a stop, having lost our hat, which was carried miles in an instant, and our knees were cut to pieces, as well as their covering of course. We were totally unable to get up, and in vain did we bawl for assistance: the wind being against us, our companions could not hear us, neither could they immediately come to us. At last they carried us back into the *tarantass*, and we reached the famous old Tatar city of Casan without further accident, the weather getting worse and worse. It turned out that the place where we were upset was a short cut, which the *yemtschiks* asked leave to take, it being a saving of a few versts, and is known by the name of the "Devil's passage."

We drove to the hotel, an enormous establishment, where we took up our quarters, the first time we had not been lodged in a private house since we left Moscow, and were not sorry to be once more *chez soi*. This ancient Tatar city is situated on the river Kasanka, and about five versts from it on the western side flows the Volga, a magnificent, broad, and rapid river. Little authentic account remains of its origin, as it had been repeatedly sacked before it fell into the hands of the Russians, and if its archives were not destroyed on these occasions, they were carried away by the inhabitants who fled before their conquerors towards Turkestan, from whence they had probably originally emigrated. Long before its final conquest it had been a vassal of the Russian Dukes, and was inhabited by considerable numbers of that nation, who were sometimes treated as protectors, allies, and enemies, as the Casanners found support from the neighbouring nations. In 1552 it became tributary to the Czar Ivan Vasilivich II., and though for a few years afterwards occasional revolts took place, it has ever since remained an integral part of the Russian Empire. The Tatar mosques were then consecrated; the people by force, or probably because every nation in general adopts the religion of its conquerors, became Christians, and Casan was formed into an archbishopric, and became the residence of the see of the diocese.

A great fire, which took place in 1815, destroyed nearly the whole town except the Kremlin and a few churches, most of the houses being built of wood, so that with these exceptions no vestiges of the ancient city remain. As we have said in the beginning of

these pages, it bears a striking resemblance to Moscow, and its modern beauty is owing to the same cause—its previous destruction by fire. It is of considerable extent, but from the streets being wider than those of Moscow, its population is much smaller, about sixty-five thousand, of whom a fifth part are Tatars, who inhabit a quarter of their own, which is, however, not inferior in appearance to other parts of it. Its Kremlin is of the same form as that of Moscow, but smaller, and is placed on an eminence overlooking the Volga, and commanding the approaches from the western side. Great part of the houses now are of brick, and the style of their architecture and that of the public buildings is very good. The university and observatory are two very handsome edifices, and there are a number of fine churches with domes of all shapes and colours like those of Moscow. It boasts an ecclesiastical academy, a variety of schools both for the natives and the Tatars, a fine library, a botanical garden, and in short all the useful establishments which characterize a great city. The professors of the university are among the most distinguished persons in Russia.

Outside the town, on the Moscow side, is a vast pyramidal monument erected by the Emperor Alexander to the *manes* of the Russians who fell in ultimately dispossessing the Tatars of their Khanate and capital. It is of colossal dimensions, and has a fine effect, standing alone on the banks of the river. There is a very good club, and the hotel we lodged at is one of the largest, if not the very largest, establishment of the sort we have ever been in. The public rooms are on a scale of grandeur you do not expect to find, many

of them fitted up in the oriental style with divans, and painted in the fashion of the Tatar times. There are two billiard rooms, baths, and an excellent *restaurant* belonging to it, and it appeared very numerously frequented. There is, however, no sort of unison between the public part of the establishment and the private rooms, which are as uncomfortable and devoid of furniture, as the worst pot-house in a small town could be: a miserable dirty leathern sofa, and a solitary chair and table being all that they have to offer. Beds are things which all Russian travellers who value such luxuries carry with them; and even in Moscow and Petersburg, the answer you get from an hotel-keeper, when you ask why his house is not better furnished, is, that it would be superfluous, as people bring their own necessaries with them. It is clearly the fault of the public, for the supply everywhere comes up to the demand, and to give more would be a dead loss to the proprietor. In this hotel at Casan, and there are several of the same *calibre*, many hundreds of persons come to eat every day, and they can lodge an astonishing number of persons. Of these a great proportion are Tatars and merchants no doubt, yet people of another class, who are abundantly able to pay for any comforts they might find, frequent it also, but they have no idea of what we consider comfort, and have fewer wants than people of the same class in any other country.

There are a number of literary men connected with the university, and the society is said to be excellent. Hospitality, or rather we should say perhaps the love of entertaining, is carried to a great pitch, so much so that

most of the resident *noblesse* are more or less involved, owing to their living beyond their means.

The trade with Bokhara and the whole of Turkestan is very considerable, especially in leather in the raw, as well as when worked into articles of use and ornament. The boots of Casan, made of pieces of different coloured leather inlaid, are famous all through the empire, as well as their soap, which is made of fish bones. Embroidery in gold and silver for *bonnets*, slippers, &c. is another article which employs a great many workmen. Manufactories of cloth and steel are also numerous. Tallow and potash are two of the staple commodities in which there is a great deal of commerce, and the province generally is rich in corn, and highly cultivated. The mean temperature is the same as that of Moscow. Bad as the weather was, we could not resist driving about the city, as our stay depended entirely on its continuance, and when there was a hope of its mending we were to set out for Nijni. We had much amusement in watching the effects of the wind in the streets, every instant people on foot were seen rolling about perfectly incapable of getting up again, and we wondered how our own *drotchka* did not share the same fate. We were anxious to see a professor of the university, a young Armenian, who is said to speak sixteen languages, and who had been exceedingly kind to some English acquaintances of ours the year before, and as he lived a long way from our hotel, we saw great part of the city in going to his house, but he was unluckily engaged at a great dinner at the club, given to the Governor, General Strekálof, who was going in a few days to Petersburg. As our stay was likely to be

so short, we did not leave our letters of introduction for him, and he was in Moscow almost as soon as ourselves.

Casan, in appearance and population, is the most Oriental city we have seen; the proportion of Tatars resident, added to that of the occasional traders who come there, being sufficiently great to that of the Russians proper, that an un-European type of countenance and different style of dress marks every other man you meet. On the second day of our sojourn here, the appearance of the weather became more favourable, and we got once more under weigh. The road was in general pretty good as far as Nijni, for we went nearly the whole way on the Volga, over which there was a beaten track; the distance is four hundred versts, and we got there the evening of the $\frac{1}{13}$rd. As it was represented to be very bad travelling afterwards, and the wind was very high, we stayed there that night, of which we were individually very glad, as it gave us an opportunity of going to see the governor, General Buturlin, who had loaded us with civilities the year before, during the time of the fair. His lady, a cousin of the Princess Butera, had just returned from Petersburg, and we got at last some news of what had been going on during our six months of banishment. The general we had the pleasure of seeing constantly afterwards in the metropolis, during the festivities at the marriage of the Grand Duke Césarévich; and we are sure we are speaking the sentiments of many other English travellers, when we say that as long as he is governor of Nijni Novogorod, any English gentleman who wishes to see the fair to advantage, will receive every politeness and attention from him.

Nijni and its fair have been so well and minutely described by Mr. Bremner, that it is unnecessary to go over the ground again. The situation of the town is so fine, that many people regret that the spot was not chosen for one of the two capitals; it is increasing, however, so rapidly in size that it will in a few years become one of the principal towns in the empire. It is situated on very high ground; at its foot the Volga and Ohka meet, and on the opposite side of them the fair is held, the connection with which is kept up by a very wide bridge of boats, which is removed in the winter time when the rivers are frozen over. Five years ago the Emperor went there, since which time vast sums of money have been expended in improving the town. It has a Kremlin, which was encumbered with six hundred wooden houses, all of which are pulled down; a palace, which is probably not completed, was being built for the Emperor; and a cathedral and new church, which is to bear his name. A new quay, and roads to intersect it in all parts, are made, which were very much wanted, as a great *détour* was obliged to be made to go from one side of the mountain to the other, which is now obviated by means of a large tunnel.

Thirty-three roads meet at Nijni, so that it is the point of divergence for all the communication with that part of the empire, as well as the high road to Asia. It contains thirty-three thousand inhabitants, and we counted thirty churches. There is a large wooden theatre in the upper town, as well as one below, used during the fair, and the governor has a good palace in both places. The upper town, however,

has little to do with the fair; none of the buyers or sellers live in it, or even enter it, except those who pass through with their merchandize from the East. These are all provided for in a large bazaar, built by the government about ten years ago, at a cost of eleven millions of roubles; it covers an immense space of ground, and is built in a vast quadrangle, which is intersected by the different streets all at right angles. The greatest order, regularity, and cleanliness prevail, the shops are built all round, and are fronted by arcades; they are let out to the merchants for the season of the fair, and the rent goes to pay off the capital expended in the building. Independent of this large establishment, there is a little temporary town of wooden houses erected, all of which disappear when the fair is ended, and the village of Kunavina close by is also filled with lodging-houses and the lower class of traders. Churches there are, and a Tatar mosque belonging to the government, as well as the theatre. There is an excellent *restaurant* from Moscow, and the various superb tea-houses in imitation of that capital, are one of the most curious sights a stranger sees there.

The tea department, the most important article of trade, is apart; the chests are all packed together in an encampment near the river, where it is deposited as soon as it is taken out of the vessels, which are moored alongside, and which are the most extraordinary looking, unwieldly objects one ever saw. The year we were there, the value of the tea was estimated at thirty-seven millions, the price at this fair regulating that for the rest of the year throughout the empire. The whole amount of goods there on sale the year

1840, from the official returns which every merchant is obliged to make of his stock, General Buturlin told us was a hundred and sixty-two millions, of which twenty-eight were unsold. Ten years before, when the fair was removed from Makarief, the largest amount had been seventy millions. It is difficult to ascertain the number of persons who frequent the fair, as some come without a passport for the day only, and go away again at night; but, judging by the passports and the consumption of bread, which is a known quantity, the general reckoned them at three hundred thousand. It begins, however, the 25th of July old style, and lasts till September; so that all these persons are not there at one time: and any one who goes to Nijni, expecting to be jostled by a crowd of Orientals, or indeed any any other crowd, will be much disappointed. There is rather the appearance of a thin population than the reverse; all the trade is carried on inside the houses, which are very small (we lived at a merchant's in the bazaar), and altogether there is none of that scene of bustle which would be imagined by reading Mr. Bremner's description. We were strongly advised, both at Petersburg and Moscow, not to go there, as we must be disappointed; but although it was totally the reverse of what we imagined it, we do not at all regret having gone to see it. The best moment is about the middle of August, before which time the caravans from Bokhara do not generally arrive, and they are the principal things to interest a person who goes there from mere curiosity, and not to trade. The two articles of which the bulk of the commerce consists are tea and iron; and there is nothing very inter-

esting in seeing many thousand chests of the one, and millions of bars of the other heaped upon one another, waiting for a purchaser. The other things of every sort and description are sold in shops, very inferior to those of the large towns; and bales of goods, which are transferred from one warehouse to another, are not even exposed to view.

There is now a *diligence* from Moscow and a new *chaussée*, so that there are no longer the difficulties that Mr. Bremner encountered in getting there; and as for a lodging, a traveller must not require much furniture, and then he will find good accommodation enough, as we can testify, from having slept in the town on our way back from Siberia. The best inn is very nearly opposite the bridge in the lower part of the town; there are, however, several. In the bazaar it is prohibited to keep a light in the houses after eleven o'clock, and a heavy fine is imposed for breaking through this salutary police regulation. The law is, however, broken by many, who have wooden shutters, which effectually prevent the patrol, who goes his rounds at that hour with beat of drum to see that all is darkness, from observing the light inside. As fire is so much to be dreaded, the rule is a very wise one. Formerly no candles were allowed, but the Emperor has latterly sanctioned their being lighted till that hour, in order to give the merchants a little time to make up their daily accounts.

There is another admirable arrangement, which conduces greatly to the health and cleanliness of the place. The whole bazaar is built on vaults, in which are immense sewers, and at the corner of every square

there is a large tower with a door in it, to which each house has a key, by which you descend into a subterranean temple of Cloacina, and an old soldier is stationed below to keep order and cleanliness. Our advice to a traveller is, to go and see the fair; to get an introduction to some merchant who may lodge him, and to take his bedding with him, and then he will do very well, even in any of the inns of the upper town, or the village of Kunavina; and not to expect too much, which is the general cause of people being so frequently disappointed. Our short account has no poetry in it like that of Mr. Bremner, but practically, as a guide, it will be found the more correct of the two. We have seen a good many things, and read a good many descriptions, and after all find nothing like judging for one's self, especially in these days of hypercriticism, when sober writers describe St. Peter's as "a great architectural failure, and the whole of no effect."

On the morning of the 11th we set out for Moscow, but the roads, horses, and weather were all so bad, that we were obliged to stop at the second station fifteen hours. The post-houses here are all excellent, and in most of them there is a collection of cutlery for sale, the manufacture of the peasants of Count Scheremétief, which are famous all over Russia. We bought several articles, which have been in constant use ever since, and both in appearance and wearing qualities they are equal to our own. They are, of course, only made in small quantities by the peasants, who, however, sell a tolerable supply at Nijni; the price is not one-third of what it would be in England. *A propos* of this wealthy

nobleman's peasants, so far is Captain Jesse from being correct in what he says about them, that it is a notorious fact that he has offered many of the very rich ones in Petersburg their liberty, and they have declined it. They and their fathers before them belonged to him, and they have no wish to lose the nominal servitude, for it is no more, and some even thereby the real protection they enjoy.

As we approached Wladimir the roads improved, and from thence to Moscow, on the new *chaussée*, were very good. We arrived there safe and sound, to the great satisfaction of the whole party, on the evening of the $\frac{14}{27}$th of January, and, on our part, with feelings of thankfulness for having been enabled to go through so long and difficult a journey, on the whole so successfully, and for having been preserved in dangers of various kinds by the same merciful Providence without whose permission even a sparrow does not fall to the ground. Whatever other travellers may have experienced in passing through this great empire, we not only have never met with the slightest difficulty in obtaining passports, and very few attempts at extorting money from us by the annoyances created by delays and chicanery in procuring them. Never, except at Moscow, did we ever pay one farthing for our passport, or *padaroshna*, which, in fact, is the same thing. Captain Jesse says, Russian noblemen require no passport; we beg to say they do, just as much as any one else. And in the account he gives of his travelling expenses, he would lead those who have never travelled there, to suppose that there was a heavy tax on the *padaroshna*, whereas, on receiving it,

you merely pay two kopeks per verst in advance for each horse, and therefore two kopeks less when actually travelling, on all the distance you propose to go. If you choose to take your chance for getting horses you are not obliged to have a *padaroshna* at all. As we hope it has appeared in the course of this narrative, we have, moreover, invariably met with the most marked attention and hospitality both from the authorities and private individuals. This was, doubtless, owing in a great degree, to the kindness of Prince Dmitri Golitzin, who obligingly gave us letters of introduction for the greater part of our route, and which were always most promptly attended to, and procured us others for places in which we were unprovided with them. A volume of travels are, in reality, a part of the history of the country where they are made; and however inadequate the traveller may be to seize the opportunity of relating events with talent or judgment, he is inexcusable, in our opinion, if he sacrifices truth. We can claim no merit but that of having practically followed out the motto which Captain Jesse has affixed to his title page, that of extenuating nothing, and setting down nought in malice. If our views are different from his, we can only say they are unbiassed by any preconceived notions, and the result of our personal experience. No two persons can see the same things in quite the same light; and favourable impressions of a country and people must naturally be the consequence of a favourable reception.

The having the *amour-propre* flattered, is often apt to give a colouring to trifles, which they would not other-

wise have had; but wounded vanity much oftener causes objects to be seen through a false, and involuntarily so, an unjust medium. It has so frequently occurred to us to find other travellers living in the same places with ourselves, judging men and things so differently from us, that we have often thought, if everybody wrote their travels, the untravelled public would, indeed, be in a dilemma in forming an opinion of any country, out of the irreconcileable statements of persons, *apparently* equally competent to give an accurate description of them. It is, therefore, necessary to know with whom the writer has lived, what are his means of obtaining information, and if there are any circumstances in his reception or personal advantages, which may be supposed to bias his feelings, or prevent him from seeing things as they are. What is still more absurd is the writing a book with a particular object, be it social or political, in that case it might as well be done without leaving our own *penates*, and would, probably, be just as correct, without being so liable to deceive others. What the mass of readers think of a book, and the reviewers too, should be a matter of little moment to an independent writer, as so few, proportionally, of either one or the other are competent to form a just opinion from their previous knowledge of the subject of its contents. The most they can do is to decide upon its worth according to the interest they have momentarily felt in its perusal, and according as its views agree with their own, and those they wish others, right or wrong, to hold on the matter. *Magna est veritas et prævalebit*, is an adage which sooner or later will maintain its ground; and, however the manœu-

vres of publishers and authors may succeed, for a moment, in leading public opinion, time, the great leveller, will stamp every work with the character it deserves.

One remark we cannot but make with respect to books on Russia, the perceptible difference there is in the tone of most of those of modern date, and such as were written in the last century. Coxe, Wraxall, and writers of that class, whom we presume to be as capable of judging, as the more recent visitors, of the state of the country, appear to have adopted a very different tone in describing it. We know that Englishmen are as well received there now as then, and we are equally sure that Russia has not retrograded since that time in the scale of civilization. Why, then, are the impressions formed by the public, naturally, from what they read, as naturally so different? Is it because the writers wish to give an unfavourable impression now, whereas, formerly, they only wrote as they saw and felt when there? We are surprised, after the mass of ill-nature that has been vented by many whose reception should have prompted them to adopt a different style, that Englishmen are so well received, and we know that there is a dread of hospitality being abused and ill-requited, in many people at Petersburg and Moscow. However little effect public opinion may have there in a general way, we know that all classes from the very highest personages downwards, are far from indifferent to the estimate which will be formed of them by travellers, and, especially, those who commit their opinions to print. We cannot forget either, that when Prince Pückler Muskau wrote of England, in

the style our Russian travellers generally do of Russia, how indignant we felt on the subject. If we could not have written with truth, and at the same time favourably of her, we would never have taken up our pen, although we have not hesitated to blame where we thought it necessary. With this confession of faith we shall only beg those who have waded through the Siberian deserts with us, to go on with us through our short residence in Moscow and Petersburg, and to accept our observations on the state of that country, not with implicit confidence, that we have no claim to expect, but as the result of our conscientious judgment after an experience, greater, perhaps, than falls to the lot of travellers in general.

Moscow has been called the city of the disaffected, a name it by no means deserves, in the literal acceptation of the term, for a more hearty display of loyalty has never been made by any capital, than this ancient metropolis presented in 1841, on the occasion of the Emperor's visit with the Césarévich and his young bride. But it is the residence of the old *noblesse* of the empire, as distinguished from the titular *parvenus* who owe their rank, doubtless, often to real merit, but sometimes merely to court favour. Many who have quitted the service, and by this step have lost something of the advantages of their position at Petersburg, which are measured by the rank that actual service bestows, prefer to enjoy that independent consideration at Moscow, which their fortune and hereditary honours entitle them to. Some who have fallen into disgrace take refuge there from the slights which society is too apt to offer to those who have forfeited the privilege of

basking in the sunshine of Imperial favour, which demonstration of little minds is confined to the purlieus of the palace, and ceases when the object of it has passed the *barrière* of the Imperial residence. Another class of those who contribute to enliven the hospitable circles of Moscow, are persons whose fortunes are ample to gratify all their inclinations there, while it is inadequate to cope with the colossal wealth and luxurious style of living, of those who lead the *beau monde* of Petersburg. Not that there are not many individuals in Moscow who are as wealthy as their neighbours of Petersburg; but the mere possession of great riches, if it is not accompanied by a certain official rank, leaves them in the one place, mere ciphers in society, while it enables them in the other to take a prominent part in the world. There are some, who, possessing all the advantages of hereditary and official rank, with enormous fortunes to boot, prefer the independence of Moscow, like the Prince Serge Golitzin, one of *les plus grands seigneurs* in every sense of the word, in Europe. It is also a very convenient place for recruiting shattered fortunes, to enable those who have temporarily involved themselves by extravagance in Petersburg, to economize for a few years, and then re-appear on the stage they have for a short time abandoned.

It is also the nursery for beauty, from which are transplanted the *belles* of the rising generation; and it is generally remarked, that all that is most lovely among the Empress's maids of honour, comes from Moscow. There is no comparison how much more beauty there is among the unmarried young ladies in Moscow than at Petersburg; while, on the other hand,

the married women in the latter bear the palm over those in the former. People who have not been at Petersburg can form no idea of the enormous expense and rivalry which exists there among those who have the honour of entertaining their Imperial Majesties. No sacrifice is too great, on occasions of this sort, in order to produce something more splendid than their predecessors, in a *fête* which the Empress is to grace with her presence, and the effects are ruinous in many ways, to an extent of which we have no conception in England. All this extraordinary outlay is avoided in Moscow, although we have witnessed many *réunions* there which cannot easily be surpassed in any city out of Russia. The consequence is, that in one place everything is reserved for one grand occasion, while in the other there is a nightly succession of the same entertainments. During the whole carnival at Moscow, there was no cessation of splendid balls and concerts, which cease when Lent begins; but although dancing is then allowed in but few houses, there is no want of *soirées*, to us far more agreeable than the *bals parés*. While at Petersburg, every one admits it is often difficult to know how the evening is to be spent; this is never the case in Moscow, and whether it is in the shape of a large *soirée*, or a circle of a dozen people, there is always something going on. The same is the case in regard to dinners; certain persons are understood to receive their *habitués* on particular days, without special invitation, and the most amiable reproaches are used if you do not avail yourself of the opportunity of partaking of this real hospitality. However repugnant this is to our ideas of English domestic privacy,

we cannot but think it is a very agreeable custom. But there it does not interfere, as it would with us, with family arrangements, or entail upon those, who receive their friends without the etiquette of formal invitations a fortnight before, the sacrifice of time, or the loss of domestic comforts. The hour of dining is generally from four to five, and every guest has left the house by seven, or if card tables are brought in after dinner, at eight at latest. Everybody knows the custom of the house he frequents, and never trespasses beyond the usual hour, so that the master and mistress are always at liberty to pay their visits in the *prima sera*, or attend to their family occupations, before the time comes for going into society for the evening. We give Captain Jesse great credit for having the courage to confess himself such a novice in the rules of all continental society, as to order his carriage at ten o'clock to take him away from a dinner party, which probably commenced at five at latest. Englishmen have the reputation of wanting to sup where they dine, and sleep where they sup. This is one of the reasons why society is everywhere on so much better a footing than in England, that it does not entail so much trouble and loss of time, on those who open their houses.

The theatres at Moscow are good, though not to be compared to those of the other metropolis; nor is it the fashion to attend them nearly so much, excepting on extraordinary occasions. The world of Moscow is a very musical one. In addition to many private concerts, there were, during the three months we spent there, assembled at one time, the Heinefetter, Madame

Pasta, Bochsa and Mrs. Bishop, Ole Bull, several distinguished German artists, and a French amateur lady, who, from pecuniary losses, was induced to come to Moscow to give *soirées musicales,* which, in truth, were attended from charity, rather than the excellence of the performances. Each of these persons made a golden harvest out of the good Moscovites.

Besides these, there are always the *Bohémiennes;* those of Moscow being the most celebrated in Russia. The music of these gipsy minstrels is the most extraordinary that can be imagined, and must be heard to be properly appreciated. It is as wild and peculiar as themselves, their habits and appearance, and is performed by about twenty persons of the two sexes, in their original dresses, and accompanied by gestures and antics of the most singular description. The enormous sums of money they make is almost incredible; the young men of Moscow spend whole evenings listening to them at their houses, and squander on them sometimes thousands of roubles in a night, and they are sometimes invited to private houses. We heard them at the splendid palace of one of the numerous Princes Golitzin, to introduce their wild harmony to Bochsa and Mrs. Bishop, who were delighted and astonished. It is certainly the most soul-stirring melody, the words in gipsy language, that can be listened to. They have a leader, under whose direction everything is done; and he is said to have refused an offer of five hundred thousand roubles to go with his *troupe* for one year to Paris; a proof what their gains must be at home. This would have been about a thousand pounds for each individual. They are also

very much patronized by the young men at Petersburg. The Moscow party also go to the fair of Nijni, and enrich themselves, at the expense of the merchants, in their evening leisure hours.

The whole Russian nation is musically disposed; in no country is street and village music so common: every peasant sings, and every *yemtschik* carols his ditty, at night especially as he goes along, and though generally monotonous, they are singularly pleasing and harmonious. A great number of the Russian words terminating in vowels, and there being a great variety of sounds in the language, render it particularly well adapted to music, though native talent is little encouraged, and consequently, few eminent musicians have existed in Russia.

The immediate environs of Moscow are delightful in summer, and as soon as the sun has melted the winter snows, all the population betake themselves to country quarters, and at Petrofski, a verst or two beyond the walls, the *beau monde* especially unite, and the *fêtes champêtres* and cavalcades succeed the gaieties of the capital. Easter is a season of great festivity and rejoicing, and the fortnight which follows it, is devoted to dancing, with the same *abandon* as carnival had been. Some of the most brilliant *fêtes* we saw there, took place at this season, after which everybody begins to prepare for their departure to their country houses, to go abroad, or to their summer quarters in the vicinity. The church ceremonies of the Holy Week, and the customs observed at Easter, are eminently national at Moscow. The strictest fast is observed by almost everybody till the clock strikes twelve on the Saturday

night, and those, whose scruples are not personally very strong, for the sake of example, do not dine at home. The French *restaurant*, kept by one Chevalier, the best we know out of Paris, is then thronged, *par excellence*, although it is at all times patronized by the *élite* of Moscow. The churches are much frequented during the whole week, most people confess and take the Sacrament, and perform the other duties their religion imposes. On Saturday night there is a splendid procession at the cathedral in the Kremlin, and, as if by magic, when the hour of midnight sounds, the churches are all illuminated externally, and every bell in Moscow simultaneously pours forth its tones, to bring the glad tidings to the world that the resurrection has taken place. The whole population is then let loose, none but the bed-ridden staying at home, to attend the midnight mass, and congratulate their friends and acquaintances on the joyful event. Every one kisses his neighbour, from the Emperor to the lowest peasant, hailing him with the words *Kristos voskres*, "Christ is risen;" and the following morning everybody goes to pay visits to their acquaintances to offer the compliments of the season.

The custom of saluting each other, that is, the two sexes indiscriminately, is beginning to go out of fashion a little among the higher classes, except in cases of great intimacy or near relationship; but among the mass it is as strongly in force as ever. We always regret that these characteristic nationalities should be suffered to fall into disuse at the beck of the levelling *fiat* of refinement. They are, or will be in time, the only marks to distinguish one people from another, and

we can see no reason why all the world is to be brought down to the same standard of etiquette and fashion. The celebrating an event so important to all mankind as the resurrection, may fully justify an unusual manner of doing so; and there is no doubt that the great majority feel an enthusiasm upon the subject, which will be lost when the old national mode of giving vent to it is superseded by the cold formalities of calculating propriety. An anecdote, which has before been put into print, though somewhat incorrectly, occurred a few years ago to the Emperor, on the morning of Easter-day, as he came out of the palace. He saluted the sentinel with the usual "Kristos voskres," and received for answer, "No, Sire." "What do you mean?" said the Emperor. "Sire, I am a Jew," was the reply.

Sledge parties, and promenades in carriages and on foot along the Boulevards, are general in Easter week for all classes of people, and for the lower orders there are booths and shows as at country fairs in England. Feasting now succeeds the long fasts of Lent, preparatory to the second period of abstinence, of which there are five in the year enjoined by the Russian-Greek Church. There is a marked *Anglomania* at Moscow, and, among the ladies, comparatively few who do not speak English; among the men not so many. The *salle* of the *noblesse*, in which there are constantly balls and masquerades in carnival, is perhaps the finest room in Europe, and on the last day of carnival a morning ball there, attended by at least two thousand persons. There are three excellent clubs, to which foreigners may be introduced, and especially the so-called English club is a magnificent establishment. Private dinners

are not common there; but there is twice a week a *table d'hôte*, at three roubles a head, which costs the society ten, and is as good a dinner as can be provided, and it is very much frequented in an evening. It was set on foot by Englishmen originally, but there is not now one English member; in fact the whole English population of Moscow does not muster half a dozen persons of the class who are likely to belong to it. The church, however, is very well attended by a numerous congregation, consisting principally of governesses and artisans, and occasionally a few Russians, either open or disguised Protestants. It is private property of the Russian Company, as well as Mr. Camidge's, the clergyman's, house, and no interference takes place on the part of the authorities, civil or ecclesiastic. The incumbent, a most excellent and useful person, has a salary from the company, which, if not large, is better than an English curacy, and even some livings, and an excellent house to live in. The sittings are all free.

On the $\frac{7}{19}$th of April, or Quasimodo Monday, as it is called in the Russian calendar, we bade adieu to Moscow with greater regret than we ever felt in leaving any other capital, from the recollection of the great kindness and hospitality we had met with from every body, and the uncertainty of ever returning to a distant country which few travellers find leisure to revisit. To the mere idler, Moscow will afford fully as many resources as any other city; for Germany, Florence, Rome, and Naples very soon cease to interest him by its antiquities and works of art. He goes over them as a matter of duty, and, like a school-boy, when his task is finished, feels relieved from an obligation,

which, when once discharged, has no further claims upon him. To persons of another class, who seek for information and instruction, a literary society is not wanting; the professors in the university, and a modern school of philosophy gradually springing up, and the meetings of the Society of Arts, will always enable him to devote a portion of his time to something beyond the mere routine of ordinary social intercourse.

With all the restrictions on the freedom of the press, it is not difficult to obtain most of the modern European publications, and foreign newspapers, though passing through the hands of the censor, are comparatively seldom stopped. Occasional paragraphs are cut out, supposed to contain inflammable matter on the subject of Russia. We never heard of the *Journal des Débats* being confiscated while we were in Russia. At the English hotel, or in private lodgings, the traveller will find very good accommodations; in the latter, especially in the houses of foreigners, at a very reasonable rate.

The climate is much better on the whole than that of Petersburg; from the absence of wind, the cold is not so much felt, and we should say there are at least as many clear sunny days there in winter as in any of the northern countries, and much less variety of temperature than in some of the southern ones. The spring of 1841 was rather a precocious one; by the middle of March, the *débâcle* was general, and a most disagreeable season it is where there is so much snow to be dissolved, but they are exceedingly active in breaking up the frozen under-crust, and the transition from sledges to wheels is very rapid. We found the incon-

venience of this transition period very great in our journey to Petersburg, during which we were frequently stopped by the overflowing of the rivers, the waters being too high to allow of the bridges, which are removed in winter, being laid down, and the time occupied in going by the *malle poste*, the most convenient public carriage we have seen in Europe, was lengthened considerably beyond the usual average. We were sixty-seven hours in getting to Petersburg, the ordinary rate of travelling, including stoppages, being eleven versts an hour. We would strongly recommend any traveller to this northern metropolis to secure apartments at Mrs. Wilson's excellent lodging-house, in the *Galernoi Ulitza*, where he will find every comfort to be met with in any continental hotel, at a reasonable rate.

Petersburg, on our arrival, was in the agonies of preparation for the nuptials of the Césarévich with the only daughter of the reigning Grand Duke of Hesse Darmstadt, and, singularly enough, as no reigning Queen of England ever before the present occasion gave birth to a Prince of Wales, so neither had an heir apparent to the Imperial throne ever before been married. Celebrated as the court of Russia is for everything connected with pageantry and display, the arrangements for the approaching *fêtes* were made on a scale of more than ordinary splendour. The magnificent winter palace, which was burned down a few years before, had been restored to more than its pristine gorgeousness, and the new hall of St. George, which has since fallen in from the enormous superincumbeat weight, was opened on the auspicious occasion. It was

truly a scene of Oriental magnificence which we shall never see again; the variety of the uniforms, the singularity of the ladies' national costume, the profusion of diamonds, and the splendour of the apartments so brilliantly illuminated, presented an *ensemble* which few of the courts of Europe can boast. The young Grand Duchess, without being what may be called a beauty, is remarkably pleasing, and has the most prepossessing manner. In so handsome a circle as that of the Imperial family, it must be a high order of beauty to be particularly noticed; but the youthful bride has a grace and self-possession rarely to be found under such trying circumstances in a person of sixteen and a half.

She had been several months at Petersburg before the marriage took place, in order to be received into the Greek Church, a provision required by law, as with us that the Royal family should only ally themselves with a Protestant. The ceremony took place at one o'clock on the 13th of April, in the gorgeous chapel of the winter palace, and, from the length of time it lasted, must be rather an irksome affair to the principals at least. It is rather splendid than imposing, and not so affecting as the simplicity of our own or the German Church. Great part of it consists of music, and the service is sung by the priests and the choir, for which the Russians are so famous, the Imperial couple having their coronets held over them. When the metropolitan had given his benediction, they embraced the Emperor and Empress, and were supposed to thank them, after which the procession left the chapel. The *cortège* was a very brilliant one, only rather too numerous for the size of the chapel, which is small. At its

entry, their Imperial Majesties were received by the members of the synod and higher order of clergy, with the cross and holy water, after which his Majesty conducted the young couple to the place assigned them, and the assistants then ranged themselves in a circle about them, the national anthem corresponding to our "God save the Queen," being played the while. Every body that was most distinguished at Petersburg was of course assembled on the occasion, with the addition of the Prince of Prussia, the Princes of Hesse, the brothers of the bride, the Prince Emile of Hesse, her uncle, and the hereditary Grand Duke of Saxe Weimar, first cousin of the Césarévich, their numerous suites, and a few foreigners who happened to be at Petersburg. The ceremony was followed by a grand banquet, composed of twelve hundred guests, to which the *corps diplomatique* and strangers were not invited. At eight o'clock there was a grand ball in St. George's hall, which terminated at eleven without a supper. The dancing, however, went on in the *salle blanche*, the other being devoted to cards, and the *coup d'œil* was brilliant in the extreme. The Empress seemed overcome by the weight of her diamonds, and being, as she has long been, in a very bad state of health, the contrast between the splendour of her costume and her sickly appearance was striking and almost distressing.

The city was brilliantly illuminated, and the number of public buildings, particularly those on the opposite side the Néva, make Petersburg admirably adapted for a display of that sort. The night was old before we were tired of driving about to gaze on this scene of fairy enchantment, which the Royal party also

enjoyed, after the supper *en famille* was over. The city was similarly illuminated for three nights. On the following morning there was a parade before the palace, after which the Imperial family went to the small chapel belonging to the palace, to hear the thanksgiving usual after a marriage. On the $\frac{18}{30}$th the new married couple received the congratulations of the whole court. We were presented with the *corps diplomatique*, the ambassadors extraordinary, who were sent to represent their respective courts on the auspicious occasion, and the other strangers, about fifty in all, before the rest of the court, in the private apartments of the Césarévich; and it was quite extraordinary to see with what *aplomb* the young Grand Duchess went through her first public reception, going round the whole circle, and speaking to every one, and generally in their own language, for she is a remarkably good linguist. The rest of the court were then received in their turns, and a fatiguing day it must have been to their Imperial Highnesses. Next evening there was a gala at the theatre, a splendid sight; but not equal to St. Carlo, or the Scala at the coronation of the Emperor of Austria. The 20th there was another grand banquet in St. George's hall to the field officers, one subaltern of each rank of the regiments of the guard, and the whole company of grenadiers of the palace. The 21st another thanksgiving in the great chapel where the marriage ceremony was celebrated. On the 23rd, a grand ball and supper at the palace, which was certainly the most brilliant entertainment we have ever seen at any court. The supper in the great hall was a perfect scene of enchantment. Three tables were laid:

one for the Imperial family, one for the *corps diplomatique* and strangers, the third for the principal personages about the court, and many supped in the adjoining corridor. The walls were covered with the splendid services of plate, and down the centre of the tables were a row of superb orange trees, twenty feet high, the pots being underneath; so that they seemed to grow out of the very tables. The fantastic costumes of the attendants, and variety of costumes, among which those of two dethroned queens of Georgia were very striking, all reflected by an obscure light, and enlivened by a fine band of music, formed a whole in which the most fastidious could not have discovered anything wanting to make it perfect. On the 25th there was a ball at the assembly of the *noblesse*, where there is a *salle* almost equal to that of Moscow. The 27th, a ball in the apartments of the new married couple, which differed in nothing from the others, excepting that the invitations were not on so large a scale.

The whole series of *fêtes* was concluded on the 30th by what is called a masked ball at court, a thing which takes place, usually, on New-year's-Day, but which was postponed this year in consequence of the Empress's illness. It is a *réunion* perfectly unique, the whole populace of Petersburg being admitted by tickets from the police; on this occasion forty thousand were distributed, and the crowd and heat may be well imagined; the singular part of it is the perfect order, and absence of confusion which reigns among the holiday mob. The court, the *corps diplomatique*, and the strangers, wore dominoes and hats; of the aristocracy few attended, but those

who were obliged by service about the Imperial family, as everybody had seen it before, and though an extraordinary spectacle to see once, nobody is anxious to witness it again. There is, of course, no dancing; the whole palace is thrown open, and the ball consists of a *Polonaise* from eight o'clock till eleven, during the whole of which the Empress was on foot; how she could have survived anything so fatiguing we cannot imagine. Dresses of all sorts from the *mujik's* sheepskin upwards were worn, and some of the more wealthy merchants' wives wore a profusion of pearls; but in that immense concourse of the lower orders we did not see one tolerably well-looking woman. There is a circle railed off for the court to retire into, within which we were soon glad to take refuge, but the Imperial family was indefatigable in continuing their promenade. When the crowd was excessive, the Emperor merely waved his hand, and they made way for him immediately, but the very act of masses of that sort moving back, in itself creates a certain involuntary confusion. We made our escape about ten o'clock, a matter of no small difficulty, but, an officer who wished to get out himself, cleared a passage for us by saying the Imperial party was coming that way, a general rush, consequently, took place in the opposite direction to the one we wished to go, and though we were almost torn to pieces, we succeeded in getting out. The hire of a domino for the night is exorbitantly dear, fifteen roubles, probably, the risk of its total destruction being calculated; ours, however, did not suffer any damage.

No private *fêtes* were given on the occasion, as the Emperor declined them; the fortnight must

have been sufficiently fatiguing without any additional obligation to exertion. There was also a review of forty-three thousand men of the cavalry of the guard, on the *Champ de Mars*, a large area, as may be supposed, in the heart of Petersburg, where such a number of troops could be easily manœuvred, independent of the Emperor's large personal staff. Two frigates were also launched from the Admiralty, to which we were three Englishmen invited, and strange to say, not one of us had witnessed the ceremony before. It was a pretty sight, and well-managed; the rollers were removed in an instant, and the vessels slipped gradually down the inclined plane into the Néva.

Our pilgrimage through this vast Empire is ended, and we think it will be admitted, that we have had as much opportunity of forming an opinion on the outward and visible state of all classes, as most of our travelling predecessors. One of the principal objects in visiting foreign countries should be to gain some information respecting them, and to institute a comparison between the moral and physical condition of others and ourselves. We hold it, however, to be a false principle to judge all the rest of the world by what is our *beau idéal*, without considering the difference of circumstances, feelings, and national customs. This is precisely the error into which many fall in abusing everything which is not like England, and the English, just as if by a stroke of the enchanter's wand countries and people could be suddenly transformed from what they are, to what these gentlemen think they ought to be. Everything in nature is in a state of gradual transition, but it *is* gradual, and not instan-

taneous, and in order to reach as near to perfection as possible, we must march slowly and with caution. England is far advanced in her social and legislative institutions beyond all other existing states, but this is in consequence of having preceded them in laying the foundations, which it has required a long lapse of years to work progressively upwards. Had there been in Queen Elizabeth's time any country as much before us, as we now are of others, it would have been as absurd for an optimist to have stepped forward, and proposed our being at one spring lifted into that position, as it is for writers of this age to propose the same step in regard to Russia. At the period of which we are speaking, and for a century afterwards, Russia had barely emerged from barbarism; how, then, can it be expected that one hundred years should have produced for her, fruits which it required two hundred years to ripen for us? But the progress she has made, must in reality be more rapid than ours, for we were in a far more advanced state at the death of Queen Mary, than Russia was when Peter the Great succeeded to the throne. In that single reign more was done for her, than, perhaps, any one century has done for us. The beginning, too, it must be borne in mind, is the great difficulty; when advanced to a certain stage each step becomes easier, and more rapid, and the formation of public opinion when once effected, makes its results imperceptibly and daily more productive. This is the difficulty in Russia, and the want under which she is labouring.

A system of laws the most perfect, and the administration of them the most zealously conducted, will

not be sufficient, unless there is a moral stigma incurred by breaking them, and society in general which is not charged with their execution, feels an interest and exerts it voluntarily in preventing their infringement. Punishment, as we have before said, has failed in deterring men from crimes, be it ever so severe. It becomes a matter of calculation whether it is not worth while for a certain good to run the risk of incurring an uncertain evil, and the probabilities being in favour of impunity, laws, in point of fact, cease to have any force. It is much the same with the laws which the refinement of society imposes in different countries. Where there is easy and constant communication with other nations, and even strangers of the same nation, these refinements become rapidly disseminated from one to another, and the feeling of what others will think of a neglect of them, causes them to be generally practised. But if the distances are so great, and the want of means of communication such, that in the same Empire one town is as completely isolated from another as if the seas divided them, and one standard of civilization only is in force to which all look up, but none beyond, no advance is made because there is no object in making it. Increase the facilities of communication by roads and steam-boats, and by that means bring Petersburg into the neighbourhood of Odessa, and in a very short time the habits of the one will be generally adopted in the other. Here is another grand difficulty that Russia has to contend with. Her very size makes it a matter of impossibility to do this, except by slow degrees, and we only think it extraordinary how much the refinements of polished

life are diffused, instead of carping at the occasional absence of them.

A late writer to whom we have several times alluded, seems to us to have travelled in and judged of Russia somewhat in the way that Mrs. Trollope did of America. There is always a good and a bad side to everything, and where is the country, and who are the people, of whom an unfavourable picture may not be drawn, if a catalogue of the bad elements of which they are composed, is sedulously collected, and all that is favourable as sedulously unnoticed. When we see the fact of a general having appeared at his own table in a dressing gown and an unbuttoned shirt, carefully brought forward to establish the prevalence of the custom, and with the intention of leaving such an impression on the reader, we have a right to assume that an unjust idea of the customs of the country is sought to be conveyed, as it is one which we never happened to meet with and we apprehend we have dined at a good many more generals' tables and *en famille* too, than that writer. One of two things he must have meant to imply, either that every body did the same, or that he lived in bad society, which is to be found in other places besides Russia. The former is for many reasons the more probable motive, or he would have said this was the exception and not the rule, and he might have informed his readers what was the state of refinement in Count Woronzow's salons, instead of only mentioning him with ambiguous hints, of which we understand the meaning, although few of those who read his book can do so. Now we will venture to assert, that out of London no town in

England will bear any comparison with Odessa, either in luxury or refinement, if the best specimens are selected instead of the most unfavourable ones. With regard to the cigar and the pink shirt, we neither smoke the one, nor wear the other, and have therefore no prejudice in their favour, but we have seen on the Continent even English ladies of high rank adopting the custom of smoking *pachétos*, which they probably would not have done in their own drawing-rooms in London, and we never yet heard that to wear a pink shirt was considered a gross breach of good breeding, or want of civilization. Still less can a particular taste for a particular national dish or beverage be so defined, if it is we must plead guilty to it; we thought it could not be held as anything worse than bad taste.

It is a pity the author in question never heard an anecdote of what occurred at the Emperor Alexander's table at Tilsit during the negotiation for the treaty with Napoleon, or he would not have let slip the opportunity of giving him a philip in order to show how inferior his ideas of decorum were to those of an English nobleman. The Emperor on this occasion was entertaining at dinner all the distinguished personages who were there at that remarkable moment, and there happened to be at table the Russian soup called *batvinia*, the liking of which may probably be an acquired taste, but it is one at least which we can vouch is easily acquired, when his Imperial Majesty asked his different guests their opinion of it. Most of them, like true courtiers, found it delicious, though they had great difficulty in swallowing a single spoonful; at last he asked an English nobleman, holding a distinguished

military and diplomatic situation, how *he* liked it; "Diablement mauvaise, votre Majesté Impériale," was the candid, but less courtierlike answer. The effect that communication with foreigners has upon people, is nowhere more marked than in Russia. Those who have travelled are very different from those who have not, especially in the prejudices they have in favour of everything Russian. This commendable feeling, when kept within proper bounds, is considerably diminished by contact with foreigners, and the standard of excellence a little raised in their ideas. This national feeling is much stronger among the generality of Russians than would be supposed, considering that they are made up of a variety of different elements, and especially among the higher classes, a great number of whom are not genuine Russians. In the lower classes it is a fixed principle that they are superior to all other nations, and that they require no foreign leaven to be infused into them. There is the strongest jealousy of any such interference, and an unwillingness to profit by it when clearly to their advantage to do so.

A railroad is just now commencing between Petersburg and Moscow, which will have some side branches, and eventually be carried on to Nijni Novogorod and Casan, the farthest point in that direction where it will be of any great utility for a long time to come. Whether, as a speculation, it will answer or not, we doubt excessively; rapidity of conveyance for merchandise is not very important in a country where the home market is limited, and the export trade only going on between April and October. Added to this, the distances are so great from whence the great mass

of bulky articles of commerce is brought, that only one cargo can arrive in a year; it is consequently of little importance to diminish the time by a few days in their transit between Moscow and Petersburg, and they cannot be conveyed at a cheaper rate by railroad than they now are by the common conveyances. Travellers between the two places are not numerous enough to make a railroad answer, nor do they answer anywhere if dependent principally on passengers. The unflourishing state of the one from Petersburg to Tsarsko Selo, which conveys an extraordinary number of people backwards and forwards, will settle that question as far as Russia is concerned. The great advantage of it will be in bringing the two capitals nearer to one another, and circulating intelligence and information among people who now know but little of each other. It is a great step in civilisation, and will work good in that way, if even the shares should never happen to be at a premium.

We read a remark lately in WILKINSON'S *Manners and Customs of the Egyptians*, which struck us as very just, that nations grow old as well as individuals. Russia has an advantage over all other European nations, that of youth. The vigour and resources which belong to that period of life in individuals she possesses, and time will gradually call them forth and ripen them, when, as seems to be the lot of all nations, some of her cotemporaries will be going out of bloom, and verging towards old age with its concomitant decrepitude. Idle, therefore, as it is for writers to decry her for not being yet arrived at the same state of advancement as some, it is still more absurd

to imagine that she is never to improve upon her present social condition. Manufactures are but very lately encouraged, and look at the progress she has made in them in ten years. Balbi, in an early edition of his *Geography*, published now some years, says, that the cloths made in the manufactories of our friend Prince Nicholas Trubetskoi rival the English ones. She has now an immense advantage in being thus late in beginning the race; she employs, as her own capital, the experience of others, and finds, ready made to her hand, the machinery, which it has taken years of labour and an enormous outlay of money to bring to perfection with us. Russia is not, and cannot be, standing still, any more than anything else in nature, though she may march slower than some of her neighbours. Public opinion makes no demand for more rapid progress, and therefore there is no supply of the article of reform. Reformers there are, and discontented individuals as there are everywhere, but there is no union of purpose, no fixed object in view at which they are aiming.

Even in the thing in which, of all others, it is most desirable to effect a change—the condition of the serfs, no two people agree, either in the mode or degree of doing it. In this matter the Emperor is the person who really desires a change, not the noble; in fact, the fear that he should do more than they wish, and deprive them of their privileges, has alienated the affections of some of the proprietary class. Others of them have, voluntarily, given their peasants their liberty during their lives, or by will; some have offered it, and it has been declined. But it is a

measure which must be gradual, or it will be mischievous for one class as much as the other. We know cases where owners of property have proposed to their peasants to give them their liberty, when they began to inquire what was to become of them when emancipated, and found that they must still work for their bread under any system or starve, they preferred to stay in their old condition. Freedom, in fact, has no value for them unless it signifies the dispossessing the present owners of their estates, and the transferring them into their own hands. The crown peasants, who are free, are now twenty-two millions, however much it may be denied, as it was last year by a morning paper, in reviewing an excellent article on Russia in the *Quarterly Review* of March, 1841. We verified the numbers at Petersburg last spring. This is no inconsiderable portion of a population not exceeding sixty millions.

But a much more important step was taken at the time of the Grand Duke's marriage towards effecting this object, which was neither understood fully nor appreciated at the time in Russia, and one, of course, which none of her detractors ever noticed in this country. By an *ukase*, which appeared on that occasion, the time of serving for the common soldier was reduced to ten years; it is only very lately that it was five-and-twenty. At the expiration of this term he is to have the option of returning to his village as a free man, and living by his own exertions as he pleases, or of inscribing himself among the peasants of the crown. By this means, in time, all the peasants will be emancipated.

But it will have a moral effect, and one much

more important, on the social condition of the country, than the nominal freedom to be gained by it. A soldier, who at the age of eighteen, was taken by the conscription for twenty-five years' service, saw no prospect of ever returning to his home, it was against all probability that he would survive the twenty-five years, and consequently he became reckless, and had, in short, no future to look to. Nothing can be well imagined lower in the scale of civilization than a Russian soldier in out-quarters, save and except as regards obedience to his officers, and the strict discipline of the service; and the greatest nuisance on an estate was a fellow of this sort returning to it, with all the vices and bad habits contracted in twenty-five years passed in camps, and Circassia, perhaps. The moment that a man was enlisted, the best thing that could happen to his owner was that he should never return; he had lost a soul, as the Russians say, it is true; but that was a trifling loss compared to that of recovering him a reprobate of twenty-five years' standing. *Now*, on the contrary, a young man who enters the army at sixteen, seventeen, or eighteen, looks forward to retiring in the prime of life; ten years is not so long to look forward to, and he has an inducement to lead a steady and respectable life as a soldier, because he may reap the advantages of it when he has ceased to be one. A wiser measure could not be adopted by any government; it changes gradually the system of serfdom, it will introduce a greater degree of morality among the soldiery, and will, at all events, have the advantage of leaving them ten years only, instead of twenty-five, in the contagion of bad example. The

landholder will be a gainer, because he will have a better subject returned upon his estate than he had under the old system; and whether he pays for his free labour at a daily pecuniary rate, or runs the risk of having to feed him a whole winter when bread is at famine price, cannot make much difference to him; the change, indeed, will probably be in his favour. Many short-sighted people found fault with the alteration in the system, because they only looked at it in one point of view, which they imagined all against the proprietor,—that they should be called upon so much the oftener to pay their quota to the conscription when the period of service was reduced to ten years, and overlooked entirely the general good which must result from the measure.

This, and the wide diffusion of education which is taking place throughout the whole empire, must have their effects on the people at large, and the plan of education adopted, we think better than the Prussian one. The schools are under the direction of government, as in Prussia; but the making use of them is not obligatory, but a voluntary act. Advantages of many kinds are held out to those who take advantage of them; but there is no penalty for not doing so, nó interference of law to make it compulsory. The higher orders in Russia are as well educated as in any country in Europe; and the more wealthy class of merchants and tradesmen are now vieing with them in giving their children all the accomplishments of the most refined system of education. English governesses are common enough in these families in Moscow, and we think it will have its advantages, without being

ultra-educationists, or considering it as the only thing needful.

The low moral state of the people in Russia is mainly owing to the ignorance of the priests. No great advance can be made in that respect, till a higher class of clergy is introduced; one which will not be so much above their flocks as to lose that influence they now have over them, but which will know how to direct it in a more rational manner. In no country has religion more hold on the masses than in Russia; but it is the most irrational and absurd superstition, whose whole efficacy consists in forms, and produces no good results on the morality of its professors. Whatever crime a Russian is going to commit, be it murder, or anything else, he begins by crossing himself, and repeating a stated formula or short prayer, often invoking a blessing on the victim, whom he curses tremendously in the next breath, before he puts him to death. But religion is a great state-engine, which works well in many ways. It inculcates the deepest devotion to the person of the Sovereign and his family, and that feeling is an integral part, and the only effective one, of it. The common peasant thinks the Emperor can do no wrong; he is in his eyes the personification of the Divinity on earth, and shares, in fact, much more of his veneration in general. This *prestige* there cannot certainly be any inclination in high quarters to diminish, but that would not necessarily, at all events not immediately, follow from raising the ideas on religious subjects to something more solid and real, than the muttering a few prayers, and fasting a certain number of days in the year. We hold no opinion to be so false, as that

sometimes entertained by writers on Russia, that the people and army are disaffected towards the Emperor and his dynasty. They feel, on the contrary, an enthusiasm the most general, and the most marked, which we believe exists in no other country, and must be witnessed to be comprehended. It has displayed itself on many occasions during the present reign, and apparently, is universal and most sincere. In the outbreak which took place on his present Majesty's accession, the people and soldiery were inspired by a feeling that they were supporting their rightful monarch, in attempting to place the Grand Duke Constantine on the throne. Those among the higher classes who were involved in the conspiracy, whatever their objects were, and many of them did not know themselves, did not desire a change of dynasty; and one of those concerned in it, told us, that he now considered the most fortunate part of the affair was, that it did not succeed. They found out afterwards what would have been the result of abandoning the capital to the tender mercies of the most barbarous mob, by general confession, that could be collected in the civilized world.

We have already given our opinion strongly enough on the corrupt state of things which exists in all departments of government. This is the ulcer in the constitution, and one which taints every part. All confidence in the administration of justice is lost, where every one knows that a sentence, nine times out of ten, is given in consequence of the party in whose favour it is, having bribed the highest. The expenses and delays are too great to appeal to the fountain head on all occasions, and, were it possible,

the evil in the earlier stages would not be done away. Public opinion must come to the rescue; all other attempts to cure the disease are vain. It is singular that the Emperor's known anxiety to check the evil should be so completely inefficacious to accomplish it. The tone and example of the Court are nowhere so much attended to as in Russia, to which may be attributed the moral state of all the ladies about the Empress. Where the slightest breach of propriety would be noticed and punished, the effect naturally is that whatever may occur, it is done most secretly, and so far, outward decency is not violated. But as far as a stranger may judge from what he hears there, compared to what meets the ear in other capitals, we should say that it speaks well for Petersburg; though they do not deny, that under another Empress Catherine, the manners of the courtiers would probably be as dissolute again, as they were sixty years ago. From the effect the example and wishes of the Imperial family carry with them, it is singular that it does not extend to the inculcation of something like honesty and integrity in the bureaux.

Very old, and probably, oriental customs are still discernible among the pure Russians, and seem to be more firmly rooted in them than in any other European people. The manner of washing themselves is strictly what it was among the ancient Egyptians, as it is described in the Bible, as prevailed among the Old Greeks and Romans, and is practised by Moslems in the present day. They cannot, however, boast of the cleanliness of the followers of Mahomet in general; though the use of the bath is frequent, it is not all that

is required. Our travelling companion, a very good specimen of Russian high life, at first, rather amused us, with the mode of making his ablutions, but, after a time, when he endeavoured to persuade us to adopt it, disgusted us. The assistance of your servant is indispensable to wash the face, but they are certainly independent of many other things we require for the toilette. The first operation is to wash the hands, for which no basin or anything corresponding to it is necessary—the patient sits down on a chair, and on another opposite to him some recipient, it matters not what, is placed to catch the water; he then takes a piece of soap over which his servant pours the water, two or three times, till the hands are considered washed, when he presents a towel, and they are wiped. Then the face has its turn, water is again poured into the hollow of the hands, which are pressed together to make them as water tight as possible, a portion of it is imbibed, and kept in the mouth, the rest thrown over the face, this is repeated two or three times, after which the fore-finger is put into the mouth, and with its assistance, which supersedes the use of the tooth-brush, the mouth is rinsed out, and the toilette is completed. Never have we seen more beautiful or whiter teeth than our companion's, in spite of this process of keeping them so.

The old Egyptian usage of not going into society in mourning, and the offering the guests before dinner wine, liqueurs, and a whet to the appetite in the shape of anchovies, caviar, &c., is still adhered to, as it is also in Norway and Sweden. Every Russian wears an amulet, generally, representing his patron saint, as the

Egyptians, Etruscans, and Romans did. This is never taken off on any pretence, is worn round the neck and next the skin, and has all the attributes that belonged to it of old, of averting the evil eye and misfortune in general. Omens are sometimes taken from them, and the religious part of the community believe in their efficacy to prompt the wearer to virtue and wisdom. Many of the prejudices of southern climates are in full force, as to some days being lucky and the reverse, the meeting a priest or a pig when on a journey, and a variety of absurdities which have retained their power among the people from ancient times.

Play is the ruling passion among all classes, sexes, and ages in Russia. High play is not more common than in other places; but all play at cards, and, generally, games of chance, but we never saw dice or roulette. That the majority of Russians have as high a sense of honour, and play as fairly as their neighbours we are convinced; but, unfortunately, notorious cases of the reverse, which have occurred, have given them a bad reputation abroad, which we believe in the main to be most unjust. But public opinion again is no check here, there are people of high rank and position who are more than suspected of cheating, and nobody avoids them, or refuses to play with them. This is also the case in other matters, to which it is not necessary to allude in distinct terms; and strange to say, in other points, persons who would be utterly incapable of doing them themselves, and have as strong a sense of their atrocity as can be felt in any country, never show their reprobation by avoiding the acquaintance of those who are notoriously addicted to them.

Without a moral check of this kind to give weight to legal enactments, as we have shown before, they will be useless either in preventing crime or correcting abuses, and without greater freedom of the press, not its licentiousness, this cannot well exist. A few leading articles in a newspaper of general circulation would shame more men out of dishonesty than the fear of punishment will ever deter, and, especially, in the upper classes, where the reform ought to commence. This is a step which must be antecedent to a change in the system of government, and which will prepare the way for obtaining it, when the natives are fit to receive it. It is a matter, really, far more important than whether the ministers are responsible to the Sovereign only, or to the people. Establish public opinion, and they will be responsible to it without any *ukase* or law to make them so, and the policy of government be led by, instead of leading those for whose benefit it is adopted.

On the financial condition of Russia it is very difficult to form a correct judgment, the accounts are given so, as not to afford any clear idea of the revenue or expenditure. That the former is increasing and will continue to do so, there is no doubt, but the disadvantage is that great part of the public debt, is not as with us a debt to the nation, and that the man who pays his taxes with one hand, receives his dividends with the other; but it is contracted with foreigners, and a constant drain on the metallic currency is going on to pay the interest, and, ultimately, of course, the capital. By this means the produce of the gold and silver mines is shipped out of the country instead of circu-

ting in it, although the exports of Russia are certainly paid for much oftener in hard cash than ours are. If our trade is to be increased, we are told we must take more foreign produce in exchange; but we must pay in ready money. At the moment when there was a greater prospect than ever of a change being made in our corn laws that would have affected the Russian trade, the Emperor, who knew pretty well what that probability was, practically gave the lie to the principal argument of the anti-corn law agitators, by raising the duty on British goods. He said to them very plainly, "I know you will go on buying our hemp, and tallow, at all events, whether we take your cottons and cloth or not; I will encourage my own manufactures by making those who will have English goods pay pretty dearly for them, and you shall pay for your tallow and hemp in gold." He knows, very well, that the outcry against the prohibitive system will prevent the House of Commons from taxing Russian produce higher than it is already, because the only effect would be to raise the price to the consumer, which in the long run would not profit the exchequer much.

If, therefore, a radical change in the corn laws is to be made, let it be done on some solid grounds, not on the demolished fallacies of Russian and German reciprocity, or cheap bread. Its ablest and warmest advocates know well the grounds on which they urge it, but they do not hesitate to admit that a slow but certain revolution in the whole social order of things, will be the inevitable result. Let those who are not willing to make this experiment, pause before they leave themselves no alternative: retrograde legislation

does not belong to England in the nineteenth century; and where they make their bed, there must they lie.

The great clog on the Russian financial wheel is the army and navy; they swallow up half the state revenues. No great improvement then can take place in the exchequer till a reduction is made in the army, and this is a most improbable event to any extent. A small reduction has just been made, but it is very unlikely to be carried further. The five hundred thousand men, who are eating their heads off for the doubtful contingency of a European war, are the scourge, as we have shown in more senses than one, of the country. Still we are very far from thinking that they are designed for conquest, or need alarm the world. A reviewer of Captain Jesse's book on Russia, who has swallowed all his so-called facts, and argued on them as if they were so really, inquires "What may be looked for from the achievements of such a force? Consistent and progressive conquest, or those convulsions which will lead to revolution at home?" We answer, neither the one nor the other. The army are the last class from which revolutions or convulsions are likely to spring; discipline is strict, and their interests all wound up with the present system; why then should they revolt? Their pay is small enough doubtless, but not so small as Captain Jesse states it to be: the common soldier has twelve roubles a-year, instead of seven, as he calls it; he is fed, and well fed too, and receives occasional gratuities—still he is badly paid enough.

As to the pay of a general, Captain Jesse is totally wrong; directly or indirectly their emoluments are

fully as great as in our own service, and frequently immensely greater. He states that those who have private fortune, are not expected to draw their half-pay when they retire. Why there never was such a thing as half-pay in the Russian service: every officer, general or other, as long as he is on the list of the army, is on full pay and active service; and it constantly happens that the Emperor, in addition to their appointments, gives a general officer a gratuity, ordinarily two thousand silver roubles a-year, or 350*l.* sterling, for twelve years, which is to be paid whether they retire from the service or not. We know many officers who are in the receipt of this, and, more or less, the greater part of them are so recompensed at one time or other. In estimating the relative pay and emoluments in the Russian army, or any other foreign service, and our own, it must also be borne in mind that there is no interest of purchase-money to be deducted. A British officer's pay can hardly be considered in any other light than that of an annuity he has purchased on his own life, and in this point of view the Russian officer is the better paid of the two. There is moreover a far greater proportion of the Russian officers who, we will not say live on their pay, but at least have no resources of their own, than in the British service. The inference intended to be drawn by Captain Jesse is, that inadequate pay is the cause of peculation; we think we have demolished that argument already by a statement of facts, which, if he or our readers doubt, they can easily satisfy themselves about.

We are surprised that an officer in the British army, who must know what difficulty he would have

in selecting, after the Duke of Wellington, the two most distinguished officers in our own service, should coolly fix at once that Generals Muravief and Yermólof are so in the Russian army. Perhaps it suited him to make them appear so, in order to show that their case, as he has stated it, was the harder. Here again we must make the remark we have made before, that all these things would be very fine if they were true, but, unfortunately for the argument, they are not so. If they had been, we apprehend the Emperor would have had too great a regard for the value of their services to have dismissed them, or have so behaved towards them as to oblige them to ask for their *congé*, without rhyme or reason. But it is enough that the facts are by no means as he has stated them.

That the Russian navy will hardly become what ours is, we are quite as much inclined to believe as this writer. But we would not say that "neither Nicholas or his successors can hope *ever* to have crews for the ships." It has improved in a wonderful manner in a few years, and we know it to be the opinion of Sir John Ross, and many other naval officers, that they are remarkably quick in their manœuvres. Their ship-building timber is not of so durable a nature as British heart of oak undoubtedly, though there is plenty of oak about Perm and Casan; but if they can afford to build new ones every ten years, they may be just as formidable in the water when new, as those that will last ten times longer. We well recollect the conversation to which Captain Jesse alludes, where he mentions Sir James Wylie, whom he calls Sir A. W., and are convinced that if he had had an opportunity of

seeing more of him, he would have obtained from him, the best living authority, a truer state of facts with regard to the medical department of the army, and would not have talked of a Count Orlof being at the head of the movement when the Emperor came to the throne, as there did not happen then to be a Count Orlof in existence. The present count, a great favourite of the Emperor, was so created in consequence of the very important services he rendered in gaining back some disaffected regiments on that occasion, and having been principally instrumental in putting down the revolt.

We confess we can see no other reason why reviewers of books on Russia should give implicit confidence to those written in the tone of Dr. Lyall's and Captain Jesse's, in preference to Lord Londonderry, Mr. Raikes, and the author of *Letters from the Baltic*, except that they wish the world to believe the one rather than the other. It is all very fine to talk about aristocratic prejudices, but democracy has its prejudices too, which the levelling portion of the press is far more anxious to perpetuate than that which takes a different view of social and political expediency. But ignorance and prejudice generally go hand in hand, and the one must be dissipated before the other can be removed. The more, therefore, is written on subjects when preconceived opinions are formed without any real foundation, the better will be the opportunity afforded to the public in general of adopting a correct judgment. Allowing for errors on both sides, the true middle way will ultimately be established, which is ordinarily the safest to follow.

One difficulty presents itself to us in going into detail on much that regards the mode of life of those with whom we have lived on terms of the greatest intimacy, a delicacy of publishing, not the secrets, but the individualities of private life, and the fear of seeming to betray the confidence that has been reposed in us. No human being in any country from the Sovereign to the lowest subject, wishes a public scrutiny to be made of the most immaterial and every-day habits or family affairs. Still less so in Russia, where, as far as our experience goes, it might be done with as little risk of throwing ridicule or opprobrium on them, as in any country where we have enjoyed the intimacy of the natives sufficiently to do so with any degree of accuracy and truth. But writers in general are so fond, on the most hasty judgment and often most inaccurate information, of giving decided opinions upon matters on which they are wholly unqualified to make a correct statement, that those who rely upon them cannot be otherwise than misled. How erroneous and absurd would be the conclusions of the same writers, if they attempted to enlighten the world on the mode of life of the different sects and classes of London itself. They might copy paragraphs from the *Satirist*, and imagine they were recording facts, which would be circulated on the Continent as such, and naturally believed. It has occurred to us frequently abroad, to hear assertions made about England just as false as those published about Russia, and when we denied them, to be told they must be true, because Englishmen themselves had made them. Truth lies indeed at the bottom of the well, and how few have rope enough

to draw her out, yet no man chooses to admit his ignorance, and thus falsehoods are propagated.

In concluding our remarks on Russia and the Russians, we have only to recapitulate the motives we have had in so doing, and the plan we have endeavoured to pursue. We have not dwelt much upon statistics, because, however apparently authoritative, they are often incomplete, and convey erroneous impressions. As isolated facts, supposing them to be so, they are useless, unless viewed in connection with many circumstances which are wholly suppressed, or at least but partially stated. We have had considerable intercourse with all classes, with the lower ones less than we could have wished, from a very superficial acquaintance with the language. We have related nothing of importance that we have not seen ourselves, without quoting our authority. Truth was our great object, without favour or prejudice. We have endeavoured to lay before our readers something of the moral state of the country, and what we conceived to be the impediments to a rapid and immediate improvement in it, nor have we been blind to the defects in the working of their political and social system. We do not expect that they will have any great weight or importance in the eyes of the public, excepting as far as the conviction of their sincerity may give them a claim to attention. However despotic the form of government, the Emperor certainly appears to us to act from the most paternal, and best motives in his enactments of law and civil discipline. It must not be laid to his charge if the administration is defective, and the engines he is obliged to employ, do not perform

their duties in the same patriotic manner in which they are conceived. Mr. Laing, one of the most independent, and certainly most anti-monarchical writers we have, has justly observed, that it is absurd to attribute the same views of territorial aggrandizement to an Emperor of Russia, as actuate smaller powers. That it is judging partially to ascribe to him the love of conquest, when the blindest ambition has so many laudable objects of gratification within his own dominions. It is our own view, corroborated by the opinions of all those with whom we have conversed in that country on the subject. We unhesitatingly assert our conviction that he is as anxious as the most republican partisan, to elevate the condition of the peasants, by rendering them independent of any undue control, and by giving them all the liberty which they are at present capable of appreciating and profiting by. He appears to us to have taken the only prudent way that presented itself of doing so; time must do the rest.

Mr. Laing has given it as his opinion that the Emperor may ever find it a *positive duty* to extend his possessions coastwise, for the benefit of his subjects, who are one-fifteenth part of the whole human race. Our ideas of his commercial policy, and its effects on our corn laws, may not be palateable to all the world, but we leave that also to time to decide between us. Let a good understanding be perpetuated and encouraged between the two nations, instead of the eternal bickerings and insinuations which characterize so much the tone of the British press; and we may all sleep quiet in our beds, undisturbed by dreams of Russian ambition, and the phantoms of Russian supremacy.

A few words on the Russian peasant and the lower orders. Frederick the Great, in his posthumous works, as far as he went, has not perhaps done them an injustice, but he has not done them justice either. He says, "Le caractère de la nation Russe est un mélange de méfiance et de finesse, paresseux mais intéressés, les Russes ont le talent qui copie, mais non le génie qui crée." They certainly have a singular facility of copying anything in great perfection, and of learning anything they attempt, but it is next to impossible that those who imitate so well, should exert any genius in inventing for themselves. In any class inventions are rare in Russia. A new steel-yard was certainly invented in 1840, which is useful and ingenious, but these novelties are seldom heard of.

Still the common people impress you with an idea of sharpness and dexterity by their manner and countenances, when put into action on anything which may profit them. Of their general disposition it is difficult to speak; in some places it is good, in others bad, but we believe on the whole they are a well-disposed people. We know an instance during the famine of 1840, which was excessive, where a band of forty or fifty starving wretches stopped a private carriage, but taking off their hats simply asked for alms, and when they got a few roubles, offered no molestation to some ladies who were in it, and went off blessing them. They have a universal reputation for *bonhommie*, drunk or sober, but on occasions they are savages, and commit the most horrid crimes. They are always lively, and very fond of music, particularly horn music, and the Russian choirs are beautiful. They show great *politesse*

towards each other, as well as their superiors, and are extremely hospitable.

Their attachment to their religion, mixed as it may be with superstition, is very strong, yet, they are the most tolerant to those who hold a different creed, of any people in the world. Whether disciplined or undisciplined, they are a very courageous people, endurant of fatigue and insensible to danger. Their attachment to their country without having any real nationality, is also remarkable. It is universal in the man who wears a *kaftan* and *tulupe*. When he works for himself, that is the secret, he is not so idle as the Great Frederick called him. Quick at learning a trade, the peasant receives very often permission from his lord to travel to procure work; he still pays his contribution, calculated, generally, at thirty roubles a head per annum, and in his absence, of course, his master does not risk having to maintain him. He will, in this case, go any number of miles to get employment, and very often returns, when his period of leave has expired, with money in his pocket. The great buildings of Petersburg are all raised in this manner, and the ornamental parts of the churches, even, are done by such artists.

They are said to be very quick at languages, our own experience does not enable us to give an opinion. We, certainly, heard a common *isvostchik* at the reviews of Krasno Selo, who spoke very good French, and when he was asked how he learned it, replied, "Par moyen des dialogues." That it is the case, in the upper classes, there is no doubt. French, particularly, they pronounce more purely than any other nation.

With these natural good qualities, and some talent besides, the one is eclipsed by, and the other prostituted to, the extraordinary love of cheating in their dealings with others. The best class of Russian merchants, and lowest *mujik* who has anything to sell, agree in this, and they seem equally indifferent as to the amount, so long as they can maintain the principle of overreaching. All their cunning, knowledge, and advantages, are employed in this one engrossing object. We believe they are made happy by the thought of having succeeded in ever so trifling a degree. We have been told by foreign merchants at Petersburg that their word is as sacred as an Englishman's for the performance of a contract when once made, be it ever so unfavourable to them, and for a large amount; yet that in making it their object is to get an unfair advantage, even in a few roubles only. Yet are they eminently charitable, and expend large sums yearly in alms-giving. Drunkenness is a vice more common than in most, we will not say any, country of Europe. They have, perhaps, some excuse, in the severity of the cold; still those most constantly exposed to it are far from being the most drunken. They are less disfigured by it, too, than any other people; they are just as civil as when sober, and crimes are rarely traceable to it. Their jealousy of foreigners is excessive; the dread of their interfering with their gains and means of subsistence is probably the cause of it, and while they are very hospitable to an individual, they detest the mass.

If this estimate of the Russian character be just, they present the most extraordinary contradictions of

any nation in the world; but this implies a proportion of good as well as bad qualities, for which they have not, perhaps, generally due credit. It would be a long business to trace the why and the wherefore of each, but their origin and low state of civilization may account for many of them. The Eastern blood yet flows in their veins, and brings with it many of these peculiarities; time will, perhaps, improve the favourable points in the picture, and correct or eradicate the unfavourable ones. Their faults are the faults of slaves; when they are all free, and have been so long enough to understand and enjoy freedom, we doubt not they will disappear.

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